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Elizabeth Whitworth Scott (1898-1972): The Architect of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre

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Elizabeth Whitworth Scott (1898-1972)
The Architect of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre

Sarah Collins Howard

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy

University of Bath

Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering

August 2009

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ABSTRACT

Elizabeth Whitworth Scott (1898-1972) became one of the Architectural Association's pioneering female students in the twenties when she won the competition for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1932. Any published record of Scott's achievement starts and ends as being the architect of the theatre so, more than simply documenting her life and work, I attempt to assess the impact her gender had on her career; and by placing her in a social and professional context, I will locate her within the broader context of modernism in twenties and thirties Britain. My research in this thesis will seek to discover why Whitworth Scott's career lapsed into relative obscurity having been the winner of such a highly prestigious architectural competition.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Architectural Association
ARIBA	Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects
FRGS	Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society
FRIBA	Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects
LSA	Licence of the Society of Apothecaries
MB	Bachelor of Medicine (<i>Medicinae Baccalaureus</i>)
M.I.Mech.E	Member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers
M.Inst.CE	Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers
RE	Royal Society of Etchers-Engravers (formerly Royal Society of Painter-Etchers)
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
T.R.	Theatre Records (from The Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon)
MRCS	Member of the Royal College of Surgeons

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis will examine the achievements of Elizabeth Whitworth Scott (1898-1972), who referred to herself as 'Just an ordinary girl'¹ but is known for winning a highly prestigious architectural competition for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in 1932. Comparatively little is understood about her and I will seek to understand how Scott came to be the architect of such an important scheme and the forces that played upon her in its resolution.

Current thinking on Whitworth Scott has proved scant at best. Powers' *Modern - The Modern Movement in Britain*² refers to Scott's success with the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre as 'the unsurpassed feat,'³ but she is not afforded a separate entry in the book, similarly with *Britain – modern architectures in history*,⁴ Scott's achievement is condensed down to a single paragraph. Stamp's *Architectural Design*⁵ supplement provides a brief introduction to a number of British modernist architects but with little reference to Whitworth Scott and she is given a negligible mention in the *Twentieth Century Society Journal*, 'The Modern Movement in Britain'.⁶ Further research into journals contemporary with

¹ *Daily News*, 6 January, 1928.

² A. Powers, *Modern – The Modern Movement in Britain*, Merrell Publishers Ltd., London, 2005.

³ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁴ A. Powers, *Britain – modern architectures in history*, Reaktion Books Ltd., London, 2007

⁵ G. Stamp. 'Britain in the 30s', Profile 24, *Architectural Design*, London, (nd).

⁶ 'The Modern Movement in Britain, British Modern – Architecture and Design in the 1930s', *Twentieth Century Architecture* 8, *Journal of the Twentieth Century Society*, London, 2007.

Scott is necessary to provide a clearer picture of other commissions she undertook.

By placing Whitworth Scott in her social and professional context I will reveal much about the architectural education, the architectural profession and the progress of modernism in twenties and thirties Britain. Contemporary sources are beneficial by providing a day to day record of events as well as the views of society at the time.

Contemporary newspaper articles make up a large proportion of available information on Whitworth Scott and they have a place in this thesis as a means of expressing contemporary opinion. However, the popular press is not a very reliable source of information therefore a limit needs to be set on their value.

In order to understand the impact of Whitworth Scott and of her design for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, it has been necessary to make a survey of contemporary literature on the British theatre. Important resources are Geoffrey Jellicoe's 1933, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*⁷ and A.K. Chesterton's official history of the theatre, *Brave Enterprise*,⁸ (1934). Chesterton was a renowned fascist, as well as journalist for the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, and described *Brave Enterprise* as 'about the worst book ever published.'⁹ Both books fail to shed any light on Whitworth Scott as an individual. *The Shakespeare*

⁷ G.A. Jellicoe, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1933.

⁸ A.K. Chesterton, *Brave Enterprise – A History of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford upon Avon*, J. Miles & Co., London, 1934.

⁹ D. Baker, *Ideology of Obsession: AK Chesterton and British Fascism*, Tauris Academic Studies, London, 1996, p.73.

Memorial Theatre (1948) by *Stratford Herald* theatre critic, Ruth Ellis, has little by way of solidarity to a fellow female professional, discussing the negative reaction of the traditional theatre-goers who were 'dreaming of winking gilded cupids' but instead they found the building 'to be on its guard lest it should rouse any emotion at all.'¹⁰

Beauman's *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*¹¹ (1982) and Pringle's *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992*¹² (1994), were published more recently and offer comprehensive studies of the theatre with a clearer picture of Whitworth Scott's involvement, yet with little detail. The Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive at Stratford-upon-Avon hold a wealth of material linked to the theatre, providing a more comprehensive picture of the building that has ensured Whitworth Scott's place in history (hereafter referred to as T.R. – Theatre Records).

For the continuing issue of the role of women in the 1920s research was made into Whitworth Scott's contemporaries, such as Caroline Constant's record the life and work of *Eileen Gray*¹³ and Charlotte Benton's *Modernist Pioneer*¹⁴ work on Charlotte Perriand, but these only highlight the gap in current scholarship of Whitworth Scott. Given the lack of information on British women architects, it is relevant to note

¹⁰ R. Ellis, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Winchester Publications, London, 1948.

¹¹ S. Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, Oxford University Press, 1982

¹² M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994.

¹³ C. Constant, *Eileen Gray*, Phaidon, London, 2007.

¹⁴ C. Benton, *Charlotte Perriand: Modernist Pioneer*, Design Museum, October, 1996.

Lynne Walker's 1986 paper, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain' which indicates:

None of the standard histories of British architecture discuss the role of women in profession. Yet involvement of women in architecture as designers, as well as builders, craftworkers, estate managers and improvers, writers, theorists and clients can readily be established. Women's role as estate managers in the late 15th and 16th centuries preceded their participation as designers of buildings in the amateur tradition in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, since the 1880s women have contributed professionally and substantially to architecture in Britain.¹⁵

The paper provides a summary of female architects as well as presenting a more comprehensive picture of the issues Scott would have faced working in a male dominated profession but still only makes a brief reference to Whitworth Scott.

The most recent research that closely relates to Scott is a paper for *The Journal of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* by Julia Gatley, 'Alison Shepherd, ARIBA; 'Success of New Zealand Lady' revisited' (2007).¹⁶

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Initially I will present a backdrop of British society in the twenties to set Whitworth Scott within the context of interwar Britain. By tracing the birth of modernism in mainland Europe I will ascertain how this style began to influence Whitworth Scott in her design for the theatre. One of the themes central to this thesis is the role professional women played in society during the

¹⁵ L. Walker, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain', *Women's Art Journal*, Vol.7, No.1, 1986.

¹⁶ J. Gatley, 'Alison Shepherd, ARIBA; 'Success of New Zealand Lady' revisited', *Fabrications, The Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians*, Australia and New Zealand, 17 January, 2007.

interwar period and the second chapter looks at how women were attempting to forge career paths for themselves, specifically looking at architecture. The intention is not to imply that Whitworth Scott was the first women architect, but instead to provide a wider picture of the issues she would have faced working in a male dominated profession while attempting to establish a sense of acceptability.

I look at the Architectural Association (AA) in Chapter Three to provide an insight into the specific influences on Scott's work, such as her peers, the lecturers and the literature that were available at the time. Whitworth Scott's early life and her influential relations are researched in Chapter Four to establish what role, if any, these individuals played in her success, or indeed failure, as an architect. I have also documented her time at the AA to discover her early abilities as a designer and how she established early professional relationships that she would continue through her early professional life.

The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre secured Whitworth Scott's place in history and Chapters Five and Six provide a description of the competition as well as an exploration of Scott's winning design. I discuss the critical reaction of Shakespeare Memorial Theatre from the architectural professional to the paying public which will highlight the issues of the building that were never addressed and formed a legacy from which neither the building nor Scott would be able to recover.

Finally, I demonstrate Whitworth Scott's response to the overnight fame and look in more detail at the probable role she took in the design. She continued to work on less prominent commissions but was never again to work on such a prestigious scheme as that at Stratford-upon-Avon. The aim here is to illustrate the negative impact that the scheme had upon her career and to suggest some of the difficulties that she must have faced in squaring the career of an architect with societal expectations for women. It seems that Scott's success in winning the Shakespeare Memorial competition was an aberration, the judging panel's desire to produce a modernist scheme was too far ahead of its time to gain acceptance and that Scott herself became the figurehead for a project in which she actually had little authorship. So, despite the involvement of a large range of different consultants, when the theatre turned out to be a less than successful stage for Shakespearean performances it was Scott that took the blame.

CHAPTER ONE MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN 1920s BRITAIN

This first chapter provides a background of British society in the twenties and thirties against which Whitworth Scott's achievements are set. I will show how the social and political unrest in mainland Europe led architects to seek new architectural solutions for a changed society. I will look at how this affected the architecture of the Netherlands, Scandinavia and North Germany in the form of modernism. Although the more traditional British architects were not sympathetic to the new style of modernism sweeping across Europe, I will illustrate how the younger generation of British architects seemed ready for change. This will reveal the stylistic influences on Whitworth Scott and how these began to infiltrate into her design.

1.1 Interwar society in Britain

At the end of the First World War, Britain found itself over-extended abroad with intervention in the Russian Civil War, commitments in the Middle East, revolts in Egypt (1919) and Iraq (1920-1) and a diminishing Empire.¹⁷ Demobilised soldiers were in 'an unrewarding and unappealing social setting'¹⁸ and Mark Swenarton explains in his essay that 'the government looked to design to carry out the ideological

¹⁷ A. Briggs & P. Calvin, *Modern Europe, 1789-1989*, Longman Ltd., Harlow, 1997, p.243.

¹⁸ M. Swenarton, 'Unfit for Heroes? The Housing Question and the State of Britain, 1890 to the Present', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.26, No.2, 1983, p.499.

function that lay at the heart of the [homes fit for heroes] campaign.¹⁹

Few of the promised houses were built and the result was smaller, less extravagant houses for the poorer of the working class.²⁰

Sterling's overvaluation deflated the economy, adding to Britain's economic suffering, which was still experiencing the heavy strain of being left with a burdensome debt after the First World War.²¹ This made British exports uncompetitive, leading to industrial disputes, a rise in unemployment and eventually the General Strike of over two million key workers in 1926.²²

The development of suburbia became more appealing²³ to meet the desire to move away from the slums, spawning planners, social reformers and philanthropists like Cadbury, Unwin and Henrietta Barnett (1851-1936).²⁴ The English architect was adopting a new vision for a better way of life represented in Le Corbusier's work on urban thinking, *La Ville radieuse* (1935)²⁵ which was seen as an antidote to the poverty stricken slums of European cities still trying to rebuild after the destruction of the war. Building in the interwar years found itself as

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Of the 500,000 houses promised, only 176,000 were ever built. *Ibid.*, p.500.

²¹ D.M. Ross, 'Commercial Banking in a Market-Oriented Financial System: Britain between the Wars', *The Economic History Review*, Vol.49, No.2, Blackwell Publishing, May 1996, pp.314-335.

²² J. Black, *Modern British History since 1900*, Macmillan Press, London, 2000, p.190.

²³ A. Jackson, 'The Politics of Architecture 1929-1951', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol.24, No.1, March 1965, pp.97-107.

²⁴ Canon S. & H. Barnett, 'Practicable Socialism: Essays on Social Reform', *The Economic Journal*, Vol.4, No.16, December 1894, pp.680-681.

²⁵ A. Jackson, 'The Politics of Architecture 1929-1951', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol.24, No.1, March 1965, p.103.

‘an element in a social environment.’²⁶ The expansion of London into the Home Counties created towns in suburbia, such as Ruislip, Harrow, Pinner, Rickmansworth and Chorleywood whose residents craved a new way of living. This provided opportunities for professional cinema designers, such as J. Alexander (1888-1974), to make their mark with new entertainment venues.

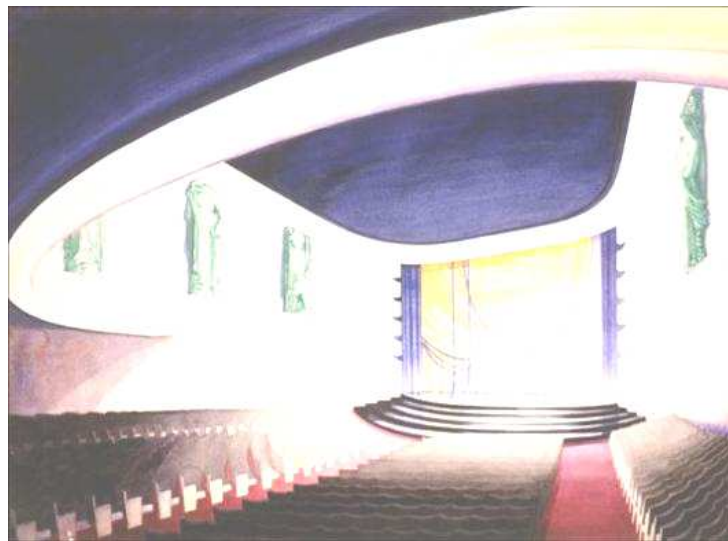


Fig.1 J. Alexander, 1930s cinema interior (c.1935)

Train and bus stations appeared throughout the country, making public transport readily available and providing design opportunities for London Underground architect, Charles Holden (1875-1960). Holden travelled to Europe in 1930 and was given a tour of Stockholm Town Hall by Ragnar Östberg (1866-1945) and visited Hilversum where Willem Marinus Dudok (1884-1974) had filled the town with brick buildings. While in Hamburg, Holden wrote to his wife, Margaret, that he ‘had a busy day looking at the latest things in architecture – offices,

²⁶ *Ibid.*

housing, cemeteries + finishing up with a 'june 1930' cinema palace.²⁷

The visits evidently influenced his sense of style with reduced and pared down decoration in which he employed mass and line and reflected the company through lettering, signage, uniforms, buildings and the trains themselves.²⁸

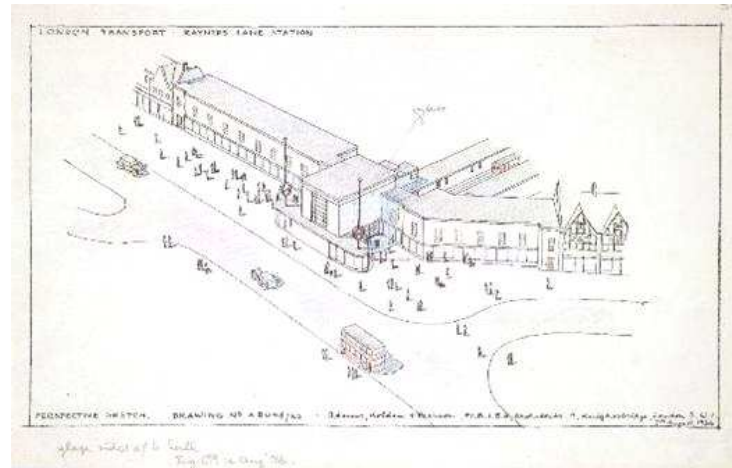


Fig.2 Charles Holden, Rayners Lane Tube Station (1936)

Despite encouraging signs, the larger picture of the state of Britain was still bleak caused by the Great Depression 1929-1933 after share prices on Wall Street collapsed creating a European banking crisis in 1931.²⁹ The contrasts between the middle and working classes were sustained and the social commentator, Richard Hoggart,³⁰ is quoted in Stephen Constantine's 1984 work on 'Social Conditions in Britain',

²⁷ E. Karol, *Charles Holden – Architect*, Shaun Tyas, Lincolnshire, 2007, p.340.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Banks chose not to involve themselves in industrial renewal as they were too 'narrow, infrequent and selfishly motivated'. By the thirties banks looked more favourably on industry's attempts to change things for the better but this was aimed more at them 'salvaging their financial positions than at developing a coherent plan for industry revitalisation.' D.M. Ross, 'Commercial Banking in a Market-Oriented Financial System: Britain between the Wars', *The Economic History Review*, Vol.49, No.2, Blackwell Publishing, May 1996, p.320.

³⁰ Herbert Richard Hoggart (born 1918) is a British Academic and writer of topics such as sociology, literature and British culture.

There was a deep and gross divisiveness at the very heart of British society which radically separated the consciousness of the Lancashire mill worker – under-schooled, under-housed, under-paid, under-cared for almost in all respects with no reasonable hope of betterment, from an Old Etonian – sure of a good job in the City, sure of a world which embraced the best clubs, Ascot, Lords, an attractive house and wife to match it all.³¹

George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) provided a vivid description of the hardest hit depressed areas of the country and graphically described a vision of Britain's interwar society with images of working class hardship, social injustice, squalor and hunger and the conditions of the overcrowding in poor slum housing:

The train bore me away, through the monstrous scenery of slag-heaps, chimneys, piled scrap-iron, foul canals, paths of cindery mud, criss-crossed by the print of clogs . . . a young woman was kneeling on the stones . . . [with a] pale face, the usual exhausted face of the slum girl who is twenty-five and looks forty, thanks to miscarriages and drudgery; and it wore, the second I saw it, the most desolate, hopeless expression I have ever seen.³²

In 1933, as Adolf Hitler won German government leadership, Britain was experiencing an upturn in the economy and a fall in unemployment. There was a general feeling of hope and optimism, moods that limited the success of right wing extremists such as Sir Oswald Mosley's (1896-1980) British Union of Fascists. Radical change was unacceptable and the country maintained order and stability, whereas in mainland Europe a number of democratic states were falling dramatically.³³

³¹ S. Constantine, *Social Conditions in Britain, 1918-1939*, Lancaster Pamphlets, Routledge, London, November, 1984.

³² G. Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, First Published by Victor Gollancz, 1937, Penguin Books, Reprinted in Penguin Classics, 2001, p.13.

³³ The Communist led National Unemployment Workers Movement launched marches and demonstrations but support was limited, only 700 marched in 1934. J. Black, *Modern British History since 1900*, Macmillan Press, London, 2000, p.197.

Britain generally faced the same hardships in the aftermath of the First World War as other countries in Europe but did not react in the same way. Where others were seeking solutions which resulted in political and economic unrest, Britain took a more inward-looking view, endeavouring to solve its own problems and not inviting change. This resulted in a much more reserved outlook on life, one that would affect change in any form, and for the purposes of this thesis, architecture.

1.2 The birth of Modernism in Europe

The First World War had been catastrophic and things would never be the same again. Aside from the palpable human loss there was also the immeasurable loss to architecture. Architect and interior designer Raymond McGrath³⁴ wrote in 1934:

It is not possible to say what probable great architects were among those millions of dead, but on those who did come through undamaged the effect of that time of destruction seems to have been a burning desire for sunlight and clean air and clear thought.³⁵

None of the old order of architects had been left unaffected by the war but those that had survived were the first to turn against the rising nationalist feeling and denounce it. The war had created a chasm in the profession between Whitworth Scott's generation who had been too young to be actively involved in it and those who, in their eyes, had caused it. The editors of the new architectural journal *Focus* wrote in

³⁴ Raymond McGrath (1903-1977) British Australian architect and interior designer. Designed the interiors to Broadcasting House, Portland Place, K. Parish, ed., *Design Source Book*, QED Publishing, London, 1986, p.120.

³⁵ G. Stamp, 'Britain in the 30s', Profile 24, *Architectural Design*, London, date unknown, p.3.

1938, 'We were born into a civilisation whose leaders, whose ideals, whose culture has failed. But we, the generation who follow, cannot accept their domination.'³⁶

Architects were adopting different styles and the period was a time of confusion. The architect from the younger generation was faced with confusing loyalties to traditions he had learnt and those he wished to practice. Colin Cunningham describes it as a 'cultural whirlpool' of influences.³⁷ Closing the chapter on Victorian and Edwardian design meant a new order of things, 'architectural radicals were forging a new way of thinking, and while the old order was moving into its Edwardian twilight.'³⁸ Publishing an article in 1928 about Whitworth Scott's adoption of a new style for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, the *Evening News* reminded the reader that only a young architect could have come up with such a modern scheme as 'youth may triumph in it.'³⁹

In his book on the AA written in 1947, John Summerson explained the early part of the twentieth century as:

A period in which Victorianism became the target of ridicule, in which the search for free contemporary architectural expression was finally abandoned, in favour of forms of classicism, which having been laid aside for a great many years, possessed an adventitious novelty.⁴⁰

³⁶ Editorial, *Focus*, No.1, Summer, 1938.

³⁷ C. Cunningham, 'A Case of Cultural Schizophrenia: Ruling tastes and Architectural Training in the Edwardian Period', *Architectural History*, Vol. 44, SAHGB Publications Ltd., 2001, p.64.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.68.

³⁹ *Evening News*, 6 January 1928.

⁴⁰ J. Summerson, *The Architectural Association 1847-1947*, Pleiades Books Ltd., London, 1947, p.39.

The adventure in originality was witnessed at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes* which took place in Paris in 1925. Le Corbusier presented his *Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau* and the public experienced an expression of simplicity of line, space, freedom and light.

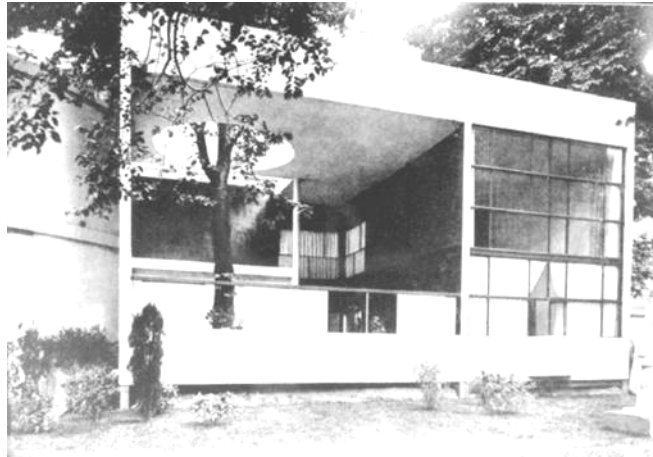


Fig.3 Le Corbusier, Pavillon de l'esprit Nouveau, Paris (1925)

Giving rise to the now popular term, 'Art Deco', many architects and designers shared Le Corbusier's disdain for the decorative arts and during an interview, French architect Auguste Perret (1874-1954) said, 'Decorative Arts is to be abolished. I should like to know first of all who associated the two words: art and decorative. It is a monstrosity. Where there is genuine art, there is no need for decoration.'⁴¹ Mark Crinson has explained that modern architecture was 'that embrace of technology, that imagined escape from history, that desire for transparency and health, that litany of abstract forms'.⁴²

⁴¹ 'Interview d'Auguste Perret sur l'Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs', *L'Amour de l'Art*, May 1925, taken from C. Constant, *Eileen Gray*, Phaidon, London, 2007, p.61.

⁴² M. Crinson, *Architecture and the End of Empire*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, Hampshire, 2003, p.1.

France was also recovering from the effects of a disastrous First World War and the 1925 exposition in Paris was a means of establishing itself as the most fashionable city in Europe. Where the French presented a more playful display, the rest of Europe (Germany did not take part) interpreted the new style in a more economical and functional way.⁴³

In Pevsner's view, the exhibition influenced sharp linear Art Deco motifs such as, 'Jazz, that type of vulgar jagged ornament which swamped Britain immediately'⁴⁴ which had its roots in Dutch and North German Expressionism⁴⁵ which were not only found in architecture, but also design mannerisms of ocean liners, aeroplanes and industrial materials.

Expressionist architecture became a largely post First World War phenomenon which had already been applied to music, art and literature and centred on the rejection of Impressionism, focussing more on inner emotions that lay behind external appearances. The intelligentsia who had survived the First World War combined their experiences along with the political turmoil and their rejection of superficial naturalism to create an avant-garde movement which sought deeper meaning and a more authentic reality. This cultural movement generated a desire for a socialist Utopia and a need for individual creativity of the artist as well as the necessity for the arts to look to each other for inspiration and combine their skills to complete the whole and

⁴³ A. Duncan, *Art Deco*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2001, p.8.

⁴⁴ 'The Modern Movement in Britain', *British Modern – Architecture and Design in the 1930s*, *Twentieth Century Architecture 8*, *Journal of the Twentieth Century Society*, London, 2007, p.20.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.24.

it was characterised by an adoption of new materials and techniques and the implementation of the architectural possibilities of steel, glass and brick.

A few years prior to the First World War, Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) and Franz Marc (1880-1916) had established the break away artists group, *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider). The group's existence was shortlived, mainly because of the outbreak of the war, but they used the term 'expressionism' in 1912 for the first time to describe the avant-garde movement in Germany.⁴⁶



Fig.4 Weissenhof Estate, Stuttgart, Germany (1927)

The white-stuccoed, flat-roofed buildings of *Weissenhof Siedlung* appeared in 1927, including work of Peter Behrens, Le Corbusier, JJP Oud, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, and the exhibition achieved notoriety as the first public demonstration of what was later called the 'International style'. Buildings were designed to be fit for purpose, with clean cut, straight lines, no adornment, simplicity itself.

⁴⁶ T. Benton, *Expressionism*, The Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1975, p.11.

All of this was achieved by new building techniques such as reinforced concrete and steel frames.

The Studio published a favourable review of *Weissenhof Siedlung* in April 1928, although the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* completely ignored it. The *Architectural Review* did not outwardly accept modernism until the very end of the twenties, so it was up to *The Architect and Building News* to inform the architectural readers of events on the Continent. Howard Robertson's harsh review of the Weissenhof was published as 'The Housing Exhibition at Stuttgart' in November 1927 along with other articles of his take on contemporary architecture abroad generally.⁴⁷

Modern European architects of the twenties that looked to the International Style saw a rebellion against all previous thought and training. Their attempts to refer to a visual set of principles that had been derived from Cubism and de Stijl and using words such as 'functional' and 'machine' were met with cynicism.⁴⁸ William Jordy has pointed out that functionalism was not something that was felt by the occupants of the new style, with floor to ceiling glass and wide open interiors, until the installation of central heating and air conditioning.⁴⁹ It is fair to say that the International Style became physically more

⁴⁷ 'The Housing Exhibition at Stuttgart', *The Architect and Building News*, 11 November 1927, pp.763-767.

⁴⁸ W.H. Jordy, 'The Symbolic Essence of Modern European Architecture of the Twenties and Its Continuing Influence', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Oct., 1963), pp.177-187.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.178.

comfortable in the thirties, achieving more comfort from prefabricated products that had been produced in accordance with visual qualities.⁵⁰

Modernists in mainland Europe were experiencing something different by seeking to embody a wider range of emotive elements in their buildings using technological breakthroughs of the time. In an article on the symbolism of modern architecture, William Jordy remarked that the architects use of technology was particular to the day, rather than experimenting with the more advanced, 'to the most important architects of the twenties, the future was not something that started tomorrow, rather the future was now.'⁵¹

1.2.1 Influence of architectural publications

The influence of modernism in Britain was still slow and the period between 1922 and 1932 was a time of extensive writing and publication. Two books produced at either end of this decade were of fundamental importance to architecture. Before Le Corbusier had presented his *Pavillon de l'esprit Nouveau* he published, *Vers une architecture* in 1923. The publication had a wide circulation and by the time Frederick Etchells made his English translation in 1927 it was in its 13th edition.⁵²

⁵⁰ W.H. Jordy, 'The International Style in the 1930s', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol.24, No.1, (March 1965), p.12.

⁵¹ W.H. Jordy, 'The Symbolic Essence of Modern European Architecture of the Twenties and Its Continuing Influence', *The Journal of the Society of Architecture Historians*, Vol. 22, No.3 (Oct. 1963), pp.177-187.

⁵² H.R. Hitchcock, 'Modern Architecture – A Memoir', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 27, No.4, (Dec., 1968) pp.227-233.

No book had ever been written like this before and, although the older, more traditional architects kept well away, it had a profound effect on the younger architects. It was a collection of essays that had been published in Le Corbusier's periodical, *L'esprit nouveau* with Amédée Ozenfant (1886-1966) which had limited circulation. The influence of the book was extensive and to many it became a manifesto of modern architecture as well as a critical work of architectural theory. Early on in the work, Le Corbusier made the statement, 'A great epoch has begun. There exists a new spirit.'⁵³

Banham points out that the correct translation of *Vers une architecture* did not use the word 'new' but this did not affect its popularity, rather:

It was precisely this rediscovery of the old in the new, this justification of the revolutionary by the familiar, that ensured the book its enormous readership and an influence, inevitably superficial, beyond that of any architectural work published in this century to date.⁵⁴

The book became a source for Le Corbusier's concept that new architecture should be created in its own time rather than rely on the past, it commended convenience and equality for all and used examples of the mass production of cars, steamships and airplanes.⁵⁵ Banham's 1960 summary of the work explained that mechanisation would reinforce, not weaken, the basic laws of architecture and once this was understood architecture would 'be in a position to re-dress the

⁵³ Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (1922), Dover Publications Inc, New York, 1986, p.3.

⁵⁴ R. Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, Butterworth Architecture, London, 1960, p.246.

⁵⁵ Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (1922), Dover Publications Inc, New York, 1986, p.3.

wrongs of society.⁵⁶ Banham believed that with this idea, Le Corbusier was 'probably well in accord with the mood of the times as it existed.'⁵⁷

The second book to have an impact on architectural thinking was produced ten years after *Vers une architecture* in 1932, *International Style: Architecture Since 1922*.⁵⁸ Produced in the United States by Henry-Russell Hitchcock (1903-1987)⁵⁹ and Philip Johnson (1906-2005), it was written alongside an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. In the Preface, the first Director of the Museum of Modern Art, Alfred H. Barr Jr. (1902-1981), wrote of Hitchcock and Johnson:

This book presents their conclusions, which seem to me of extraordinary, perhaps of epoch-making, importance. For they have proven beyond any reasonable doubt, I believe, that there exists today a modern style as original, as consistent, as logical and as widely distributed as any in the past. The authors have called it the International Style.

The collaborated essays included the work of major figures such as Le Corbusier, as well as a summary of the formal characteristics of the International Style. It took a different view to *Vers une architecture* by saying that the modern style was not a 'new spirit' but rather that it was a new style that had taken elements from the old.

The interwar period also saw the publication of contemporary European journals such as *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* and the avant-garde

⁵⁶ R. Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, Butterworth Architecture, London, 1960, p.245.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ A.K. Placzek, 'Brief Review of the Decade's Architectural Literature', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 24, No.1, (March 1965), pp.34-35.

⁵⁹ Hitchcock was a leading American architectural historian who had already published *Modern Architecture* in 1929. *Ibid.*

L'architecture vivante, edited by Jean Badovici which went on until 1933.⁶⁰ Another forward-thinking journal was by Italian architect, critic and journalist, Alberto Sartoris (1901-1998), *Gli Elementi dell'Architettura Funzionale*. This widely influential magazine became a key reference work on the avant-garde at the time and was known to be preferred by Le Corbusier.⁶¹ Sartoris compiled examples of the new style active around the world believing the general mode of thinking that modernist architecture was based on the rejection of superfluous elements, a respect for tradition, harmony between line, colour and contrast and an investigation of a specific style.⁶² For a country that did not produce the brick expressionism seen in Northern Europe, Italy did manage to produce other journals including *Casabella*, which still publishes a representation of architectural culture, and *L'Architettura*.

J.J.P. Oud, Dudok and Berlage produced some work for publications for the Netherlands and although Alvar Aalto was becoming the 'Father of Modernism' in Scandinavia, he was not known for his writing. By the late twenties design was becoming political and Erich Mendelsohn, Bruno Taut and the Bauhaus were being able to publish less and less because of the Nazi Party's propaganda.⁶³

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ T. Muirhead, Obituary, *The Independent*, 26 May, 1998.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ A.K. Placzek, 'A Brief Review of the Decade's Architectural Literature', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 24, No.1, (March 1965), pp.34-35.

1.2.2 Modernism in the Netherlands

Architecture in the Netherlands was particularly influential on British architecture in the twenties, an influence that would appear in Whitworth Scott's theatre. Two very different schools of architectural thought had started to emerge in the Netherlands after the First World War. De Stijl contributed directly to the development of functionalism, whereas the Amsterdam School was more responsive to the social, political and economic circumstances that the country was facing and their architecture was far more intuitive with a deep-rooted social vision. Although the Netherlands had remained neutral in the war between Germany and the Allies, it was still affected by events and there was a scarcity of commodities at the close of the war.

Councils and co-operatives stepped in to solve the severe housing shortage under the direction of Dr. Airie Keppler, who was open to experimentation, particularly building garden villages based on the English idea.⁶⁴ The results were typified by the expressionist brick architecture defined as 'The Amsterdam School'⁶⁵ which emphasised individual artisans as well as addressing the issue of urbanism and the combination of all the crafts. The monthly magazine of the Amsterdam School was *Wendingen* with Hendrik Wijdeveld (1885-1987)⁶⁶ as editor. He concentrated on new design and his commentary on Park Meerwijk

⁶⁴ M. Casciato, *The Amsterdam School*, 010 Publisher, Rotterdam, 2003, p.190.

⁶⁵ H. van Dijk, J Kirkpatrick, *Twentieth Century Architecture in the Netherlands*, 010 Publishers, Rotterdam, 1999, p.30.

⁶⁶ Hendrikus Theodorus Wijdeveld (1885-1987), Dutch architect, author, interior designer and theoretician. Worked and trained under PJH Cuypers. *Ibid.*

in Bergen applied the term 'expressionist' for the first time to Dutch architecture.⁶⁷

Park Meerwijk contained designs from J.F. Staal⁶⁸ and his wife M. Staal-Kropholler,⁶⁹ her brother A.J. Kropholler,⁷⁰ C.J. Blaauw⁷¹ and P.L. Kramer.⁷² It was the first appearance of Dutch organic forms in architecture and according to the Principal of the AA, Howard Robertson, Dutch architecture's treatment of the new manner of design 'had much to offer as an inspiration to architects of the modern school.'⁷³ He explained that:

The Dutch modernist has achieved his most characteristically novel effects in the handling of form. The majority of new buildings are emphatic in their composition of mass, the grouping being dominated by a sense of direction, either horizontal or vertical, with a third element of what may be called picturesque.⁷⁴

Elements of the Dutch modernist style belonged to the vernacular tradition of the British Arts and Crafts movement and were clearly expressed in the designs for Park Meerwijk. The similarities lay in the relationship of the interior layouts which produced, what appears to be,

⁶⁷ *Wendingen*, No.8, 1918.

⁶⁸ Jan Frederik Staal (1879-1940), was in partnership with A.J. Kropholler and married his sister Margaret. Worked initially for his father then Berlage. H. van Dijk, *Twentieth Century Architecture in the Netherlands*, 010 Publishers, Rotterdam, 1999.

⁶⁹ Margaret Staal-Kropholler (1891-1960) designed furniture and fittings in her husband and brother's architectural practice. *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Alexander Jacobus Kropholler (1881-1973), worked in partnership with Staal from 1902-1910 until breakdown in relationship. Worked for the Nazis during WWII and had interest in traditionalism and vernacular architecture. *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Cornelius Juke Blaauw (1885-1947) worked for Berlage, edited *Wendingen*. *Ibid.*

⁷² Piet Lodewijk Kramer (1881-1961) collaborated with Michel de Klerk while working for Eduard Cuypers. *Ibid.*

⁷³ H. Robertson & F.R. Yerbury, *Travels in Modern Architecture*, The Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.61.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.62.

a disarray of exterior elements, allusions of which were made to the external elevations of Whitworth Scott's theatre design.



Fig.5 M. Staal-Kropholler, Villa Meerluis, Bergen (1915-1918)



Fig.6 C.J. Blaauw, Villa Meerhoek, Bergen (1915-1918)

The Amsterdam School sought to embody high social values in design by creating their own vernacular using Dutch materials and processes. Thatching, tile hanging, horizontal creosoted boarding and brickwork were used to create expressive forms⁷⁵ and comparisons can be made with the work of Norman Shaw (1831-1912), Baillie Scott (1865-1945), Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) and C.F. Voysey (1885-1941).

⁷⁵ T. Benton, *Expressionism*, The Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1975, p.23.

Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1856-1934), was seen by many architects as the 'Father of Modern Architecture' and aspired to a non-individualistic style which he based on the materials and social developments of the day. He considered that the shaping of the space was more important than the façade and his later designs incorporated a variety of different shaped volumes dominated by a tall tower.⁷⁶ These elements show strong similarities to the front elevation of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre with its striking stair tower on the north east corner.

To display his socialist ideas about low cost housing and city planning, Michel de Klerk (1883-1923) started to celebrate forms, colours and textures with traditional Dutch materials of brick and tiles. One set of housing blocks in Amsterdam, *Het Schip* (The Ship), is a perfect example of his bizarre brick patterns, humped and jutting profiles and a conical shaped tower.



Fig.7 Michel de Klerk, *Het Schip* (1917-1920)

⁷⁶ H. van Dijk, *Twentieth Century Architecture in the Netherlands*, 010 Publisher, Rotterdam, 1999, p.22

American urbanist, Catherine Bauer, wrote an appreciation of Dutch architecture in *Modern Housing* in 1934:

Berlage and his followers influenced on the one hand by the Medievalism of Morris and on the other by the freer and more original genius of Frank Lloyd Wright achieved the first real vernacular of modern architecture. That is a 'style' whose monuments were not to be found merely in isolated villas or public buildings, but in whole blocks and streets of 'housing' and shops and offices, in plotting and planning, and within the dwelling of l'homme moyen sensuel as well as in those of the more advanced or Bohemian literati.⁷⁷

Bauer saw that the Dutch had succeeded to improve the lives of those with housing needs with style, expression and emotion. They provided a dignified, unified way of living where other countries had failed.

1.2.3 Modernism in Scandinavia

The Scandinavian countries were producing architecture that was appearing in journals and was influencing the designs of new architects. Although modernism was more limited in Scandinavia in comparison to the rest of mainland Europe, its influence on British architecture in the twenties and thirties was significant. Scandinavian architects took to re-examining the principles of classical antiquity to find solutions to design and published their research and discussions in contemporary Scandinavian journals.⁷⁸ The result of these findings created terms like, 'Nordic classicism', 'New classicism' and 'National Romanticism'.

⁷⁷ C. Bauer, *Modern Housing*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1934, p.109.

⁷⁸ M.C. Donnelly, *Architecture in the Scandinavian Countries*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1992, p.303.

After the First World War, Denmark experienced high unemployment and a growing radicalism resulting in a confusion of the social and moral order. The government took control with stricter rules over society and the economy causing greater hardship for the working classes and creating a strong sense of socialism.⁷⁹ Art exhibitions had come to a virtual standstill because of the war which meant a curtailment of the exchange of ideas between Denmark and other European countries. The artist community turned towards a more historical and traditional approach but this created an emphasis on pre-war middle class ideals which ignored the problems and needs of the working class. The resulting approach was deemed too naïve and the Danish entries in the 1925 exposition in Paris were heavily criticised.⁸⁰

This reaction enraged architect Poul Henningsen (1894-1967), who knew that the Danish 'new classicism' was too traditional and elitist and had hoped the Paris exhibition would be Denmark's opportunity to experience the new era of design. Henningsen wrote in the Danish cultural journal *Kritisk Reuy*:

Architecture's primary role at present seems to be to confuse the audience. The battle of the arts (including architecture) is apparently the world on a new form. Modern artists in all countries fighting for things we surround ourselves with and the houses in which we live, should look quite different than before the social problems and technical revolution. The modern viewpoint is that a new object necessarily requires a modern form. Telephone, radio, car, airplane cannot be solved in the known styles. This new form will create a new aesthetic culture, we must let the more decorative and indifferent objects (chairs, material, lighting etc) shape this new perception of beauty, whereby a new style will emerge. . . New

⁷⁹ C. Selkurt, 'New Classicism: Design of the 1920s in Denmark', *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 4 (Spring, 1987), pp.16-29.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

materials will dominate the Arts where they offer new possibilities. Now the question is how profound this new style should be.⁸¹

With references to *Vers une architecture*, Henningsen recognised that the application of modern materials and technology would create extra problems as well as those they were trying to address.



Fig.8 Poul Henningsen's article, 'Tradition or Modernism', *Kritisk Revy*, 2 June 1927

Henningsen was affronted that his country's efforts to successfully employ modernism had been condemned when others had not fully answered the problem by failing to look to the real needs of a modern society.⁸² His anger at the view that Denmark was naïve was justified as the Danish response to a new style had already been answered before the war by P.V. Jensen-Klint's (1853-1930) Grundtvig Mindekirche in Bispebjerg. Jensen-Klint was a forward-thinking architect whose church stands as an early example of the influence of

⁸¹ P. Henningsen, 'Tradition og Modernisme', *Kritisk Revy*, 2 June, 1927, p.30.

⁸² The exterior was built 1921-1926. Interiors were completed after his death by his son, Kaare Klint (1888-1954) who had broken away from the conservative Beaux-arts teaching of the Royal Academy in Copenhagen to form the private school, *The Free Association of Architects* whose leading figures included, Kaare Klint, Carl Petersen (1874-1923), Ivar Bentsen (1876-1943), Edvard Thomsen (1884-1980) and Kaj Gottlob (1887-1976). C. Selkurt, 'New Classicism: Design of the 1920s in Denmark', *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 4 (Spring, 1987), pp.16-29.

brick expressionism. With its church organ-like appearance and strong Gothic traces the design was based on traditional building techniques and materials of local village churches which Jensen-Klint studied in preparation for the design.⁸³



Fig.9 Jensen-Klint, Grundtvig Mindekirke, Bispebjerg (1913)

In Sweden, the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement was evident in Stockholm Town Hall (1911-1923) designed by Ragnar Östberg (1866 -1945). The construction employed craftsmen using traditional materials and techniques, rich ornament set against large plain masses of brickwork and a strong monumental tower as a picturesque example of Sweden's 'national romanticism'. On an excursion to the Jubilee Exhibition 1923 in Sweden with Howard Robertson, Francis Yerbury described the Town Hall as 'the finest modern building in the world'.⁸⁴

⁸³ K. Frampton, *modern architecture*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2007, p.193.

⁸⁴ F.R. Yerbury, *Swedish Architecture of the Twentieth Century*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1924.



Fig.10 Ragnar Östberg, Stockholm City Hall (1911-1923)

Swedish architecture, in particular, was seen as being rooted in traditionalism but not convention and Francis Yerbury was inspired by the work. His book on Swedish architecture started a whole range of similar publications on France, Holland and Denmark where he managed to bring mainland European architectural styles directly to the drawing boards of the AA.

1.2.4 Modernism in Northern Germany

The German search for a Utopian society after the First World War was particularly strong, leading to political and economic turmoil and architects seeking new and bold solutions. Brick expressionism was a result and architect, Hans Poelzig (1869-1936), better known for his work remodelling of the Berlin Grosses Schauspielhaus (1919), was

closely associated with expressionism using brick in a simplified classical manner for commercial and residential buildings in Berlin.

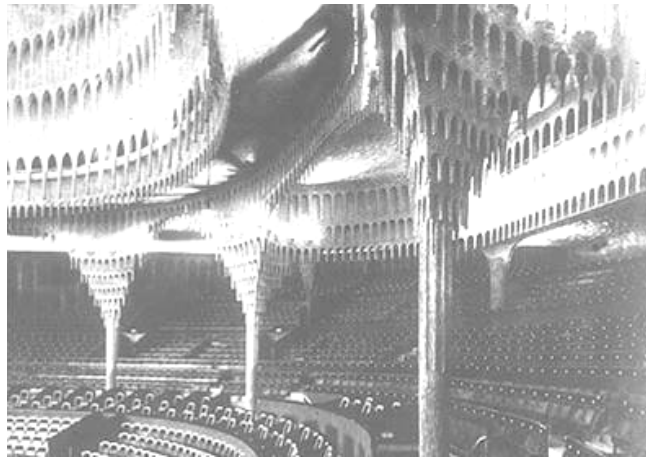


Fig.11 Hans Poelzig, Grosses Schauspielhaus (1919)

Hamburg's Speicherstadt⁸⁵ and Kontorhaus office district had huge commercial buildings using richly ornamented brick façades with turrets and gables on the roofs and incorporated modern infrastructure such as electricity, lifts and central heating. Architects made full use of the unusually shaped sites created by the street pattern, used dark coloured hard-fired clinker bricks and achieved maximum height by cutting back the upper storeys⁸⁶ which were all similar elements to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. By the end of the twenties, buildings such as Chile-Haus, Messberghof, Sprinkenhof and Mohlenhof were presenting expressionist brick examples for British architects.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Speicherstadt – warehouse district built in phases between 1883 and 1928. J. Zukowsky, K.A. Laney-Lupton, W.G. Lesnikowski, *Architektur in Deutschland, 1919-1939*, Prestel, University of Michigan, 1994.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ G. Stamp, 'Britain in the 30s', Profile 24, *Architectural Design*, London, date unknown, p.7.

Fritz Höger's dark-red brick Chile-Haus (1922-24), with its distinctive sharp tipped corner, warranted expansive words from Howard Robertson such as 'rhythmic', 'power', 'pulsating', 'free', even 'wicked':

But there is the Chile-Haus façade which cracks along the street with compelling swish of a stockwhip, and then brutally sticks out a sharp point at the end, with a sort of touch-me-if-you-dare challenge. One feels that this big powerful fellow ought to be controlled, that after an era of timid gentility in building, design like this is all wrong.⁸⁸

Robertson saw the Chile-Haus as example of the new spirit which was 'noticeable in the manner of approach to a building problem'.⁸⁹



Fig.12 Fritz Höger, Chile-haus (1922)

Messberghof was designed by the brothers, Hans and Oskar Gerson. Hans died early in 1931 and Oskar emigrated to America in 1939 since he was Jewish and unable to practice architecture in Germany.⁹⁰ The

⁸⁸ H. Robertson & F.R. Yerbury, *Travels in Modern Architecture*, The Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.97.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.96.

⁹⁰ J. Zukowsky, K.A. Laney-Lupton, W.G. Lesnikowski, *Architektur in Deutschland, 1919-1939*, Prestel, University of Michigan, 1994, p.112.

dark clinker building was the first attempt at a high-rise solution and they employed sculptor Ludwig Kunstmann (1877-1961) to make decorative elements with eight large sculptures at first floor level, similar to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre carvings.⁹¹



Fig.13 Hans & Oskar Gerson, Messberghof (1924)

Sprinkenhof started as a collaboration between the Gerson brothers and Höger, but after the death of Hans and then the emigration of Oskar, Höger completed the building alone. The massive complex followed the unusual street pattern, used the trademark dark clinker and again used the ceramic façade decorations of Ludwig Kunstmann.⁹²

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*



Fig.14 Gerson brothers & Höger, Sprinkenhof (1927)

Rudolf Klophaus (1885-1957) and August Schoch (b.1881) worked with Erich zu Putlitz (1892-1945) on the Mohlenhof. With its rhythmic patterns and severity of mass it is regarded as the best example of the most developed style of brick expressionism in Hamburg.⁹³ Along with the reduction in decoration it also had the trademark sculpture by Richard Kuöhl (1880-1961) who had also worked on the Chile-Haus.⁹⁴



Fig.15 Klophaus, Schoch & Putlitz, Mohlenhof (1928)

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.119.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

As the construction moved into the thirties it became evident that the architectural attitudes were changing, partly because of the changes in the economic conditions but also because of the intentions of the Third Reich to create a more traditional urban environment. For this architects began to use forms similar to the much older buildings in Hamburg to create an 'olde Hamburg'.⁹⁵

Germany had been the enemy and the effect on British attitudes after the First World War was still not fully resolved. The interwar period was the only opportunity for the newly trained or young British architect to take anything away from German architecture in terms of style, new innovations and technical advances and this seems to have benefited the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.

1.3 Modernism in Britain

The first stirrings of modernism can be traced back to the twenties and traditional English architects were not sympathetic.⁹⁶ Howard Robertson⁹⁷ taught at the AA after the First World War and was influential in creating a change of mood within the architectural system⁹⁸ by writing and publishing articles of contemporary architecture abroad.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ 'The Modern Movement in Britain', 'British Modern – Architecture and Design in the 1930s', *Twentieth Century Architecture 8, Journal of the Twentieth Century Society*, London, 2007, p.13.

⁹⁷ Sir Howard Morley Robertson (1888-1963) Principal of the AA 1920-1932 and the school's Director of Education from 1932-1935.

⁹⁸ A. Jackson, 'The Politics of Architecture 1929-1951', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol.24, No.1, March 1965, pp.97-107.

This is evident in the publication of *Travels In Modern Architecture*,⁹⁹ an anthology of twenty of some two hundred published articles in collaboration with the AA secretary and architectural photographer, Francis Rowland Yerbury (1885-1970). The work they produced succeeded in making them appear extreme and far more radical¹⁰⁰ than the current thinking of the day as few British publications were giving any column space to the events in Europe.

In April 1927, Robertson published an article in the weekly *The Architect and Building News* which was a first on the houses of Le Corbusier, 'Architecture of the Modernist School'.¹⁰¹ Although Robertson accepted the controversial nature of the buildings he also described them as 'being put up in France by a group of men who are attempting to express design in the very difficult terms of modern life' which he saw, in quite logical terms, as the apparent reduction in cost:

These houses show whatever virtue lies in clean simplicity, the shapes being entirely reasonable. Details such as doorhoods, window boxes, balcony rails, etc., could obviously be enriched were the means forthcoming.¹⁰²

At the same time as European architects were celebrating architecture with their exhibition estate, Weissenhof Siedlung, British architects were still pretending nothing was happening.¹⁰³ Many had difficulty accepting

⁹⁹ H. Robertson & F.R. Yerbury, *Travels in Modern Architecture, 1925-1930*, The Architectural Association, London, 1989.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.15

¹⁰¹ 'Architecture of the Modernist School', *The Architect and Building News*, 29 April 1927, pp.745-748.

¹⁰² H. Robertson & F.R. Yerbury, *Travels in Modern Architecture, 1925-1930*, The Architectural Association, London, 1989, pp.12-13

¹⁰³ A. Jackson, 'The Politics of Architecture 1929-1951', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol.24, No.1, March 1965, pp.97-107.

the Modern Movement and could not recognise the new movement stylistically as well as what it apparently stood for. There was concern about its representation of a new way of life as well as its social and political values.¹⁰⁴

One staunch opponent of this new movement was the architect, Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942),¹⁰⁵ whose love of Baroque and Renaissance architecture did not endear him to modernism which he insisted on calling, *Modernismus*. He argued that 'it is a conscious and deliberate pose, based on mistaken sociological theories and on arbitrary psychological assumptions.'¹⁰⁶ He raged against the un-Englishness of modernism in an article in *The Listener* in 1933, 'It is essentially Continental in its origins and inspiration, and it claims as a merit that it is cosmopolitan. As an Englishman and proud of his country, I detest and despise its cosmopolitanism.'¹⁰⁷

Blomfield saw modernism as a negative and treacherous social and political force which expressed itself in architecture. For him it had a dangerous and unacceptable 'meaning' and he played on the fears and emotions of the day at the emergence of extremism. A year later, still in *The Listener*, he said:

Whether this movement is Hitlerism or Bolshevism, Fascism or Communism, is immaterial. . . . the packing case buildings we see

¹⁰⁴ N. Whiteley, 'Modern Architecture, Heritage and Englishness', *Architectural History*, Vol.38, 1995, pp.220-237.

¹⁰⁵ Sir Reginald Blomfield sat on the Board of Ancient Monuments and was the principal architect of the Imperial War Graves Commission.

¹⁰⁶ Sir R. Blomfield, *Modernismus*, Macmillan, London, 1934, pp.168-169.

¹⁰⁷ 'Is Modernism on the right track?', *The Listener*, 26 July 1933, p.124.

disfiguring the landscape, and the gratuitous eccentricities that disturb us in the streets all spring from this insidious and dangerous germ.¹⁰⁸

The general perception of modernism in England was scarce in the twenties with large commissions generally built in the neo-classical style, such as Blomfield's remodelling of Regent Street in London, while domestic buildings were still employing neo-Georgian or the Arts and Crafts. Edwin Lutyens had been a strong proponent in the use of brickwork but adopted more Arts & Crafts, Classical and vernacular styles that became his trademark. Britain had become dominated by the Lutyenesque neo-classicism, giant classical orders for large urban office buildings, town halls and bank headquarters, along with the strong influence of the very vocal Sir Reginald Blomfield.

A very early example of British brick expressionism appeared in the unlikeliest of places, the Isle of Wight. It took a year to build Quarr Abbey (1911-1912) by the little known French, Beaux-Arts trained architect, Paul Bellot (1878-1944), a Benedictine monk whose work had included numerous churches and religious buildings in the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, France and later, Canada. Bellot's buildings were in brick and displayed distinctive influences of the expressionist architecture of the Netherlands and Germany¹⁰⁹ as he used Belgian bricks in a stepped formation to create pointed arches.¹¹⁰ His work has been described as, 'A fantastic cabaret of devices which could place

¹⁰⁸ 'For and against Modern architecture', *The Listener*, 28 November 1934, p.888.

¹⁰⁹ D. Cruickshank, ed., *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture*, 20th edition, Architectural Press, Oxford, 2001, p.1327.

¹¹⁰ I. Jenkins & D. Stancliffe, *The Lion Companion to Church Architecture*, Lion Hudson plc, Oxford, 2008, p.242.

him easily among the expressionists.¹¹¹ Nikolaus Pevsner described Bellot as, ' . . . a virtuoso in brick. All is brick and all has to be done angularly; for such is the bricks nature.'¹¹²



Fig.16 Paul Bellot, Quarr Abbey (1911-1912)

Brick expressionism in Britain began to have more impact in public buildings slightly later and with more effect in the thirties. Dudok had completed the Town Hall in Hilversum in 1931, rendered entirely in brick, and the town hall in Hornsey, North London has unmistakable influences from this and Stockholm Town Hall. A competition in 1933 was assessed by Charles Cowles-Voysey (1889-1981), son of CFA Voysey, who was responsible for the design of Worthing Town Hall, a more classical red brick municipal building. Reginald Uren's (1906-1988) winning design for Hornsey is of plain brick surfaces, dominated by a campanile and opened in 1935.

¹¹¹ E. Heathcote & I. Spens, *Church Builders*, Academy Editions, London, 1997, p.40.

¹¹² N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, Penguin Books, 1951, p.761.



Fig.17 W.M. Dudok, Hilversum Town Hall (1931)



Fig.18 Reginald Uren, Hornsey Town Hall (1935)

Another later example was Norwich City Hall built in 1938 by Charles Holloway James (1893-1953) and Stephen Rowland Pierce (1896-1966). James not only worked with Lutyens and Parker and Unwin but also lectured in 'Housing and Site Planning' at the AA at the time Whitworth Scott was a student. The City Hall had been planned after

Robert Atkinson, later the Principal of the AA, had been asked by Norwich City Council to plan the city layout. The campanile on the hall has remarkable similarities to that of Östberg's Stockholm City Hall and was clearly influenced by it.



Fig.19 James & Pierce, Norwich City Hall (1938)

Scandinavian influences were becoming more common with the Portland stone Guildhall in Swansea, which was one of the first to employ the classic approach to modernism in 1934 by Sir Percy Thomas (1883-1969).¹¹³

Conclusion

The end of the First World War witnessed changes in government, civil unrest and new directions both politically and artistically in many countries of mainland Europe. Although Britain was also heavily burdened economically it managed to hold its position in terms of social

¹¹³ D. Cruickshank, ed., *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture*, 20th edition, Architectural Press, Oxford, 2001, p.1346.

unrest and turned inwards, not only as a society but also culturally.

There had been no occupation by enemy forces in the war, radicals had little or no impact, so any other assault on British tradition was viewed with suspicion.

The more traditional British architect, who had trained prior to the First World War, tried to ignore events in mainland Europe and treated the new approach to design as a threat. The younger architects of Whitworth Scott's generation were seeking new inspiration and new approaches to architecture and the new buildings of northern Europe were appearing in publications, exhibitions and they were witnessing them during visits across the Channel. Dialogue transferred skills and information and the young British architect was discovering something innovative and refreshing.

Whitworth Scott was experiencing all these events and they were shaping her take on design. Obvious architectural and stylistic influences from Northern European countries were appearing in British modernist buildings and the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was no exception with its dark bricks, solid massing, stepped back elevations and stylised carvings representing the theme of the building.

CHAPTER TWO PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

The aim of this chapter is to identify the societal forces that enabled Whitworth Scott to be propelled forward as a pioneering member of her profession. I will show how society was moving away from traditional attitudes to women, in their education and their entry into professional life. This allows me to illustrate the role of the professional woman and how the various professions were seeing their first women practitioners.

There will be particular emphasis on female architects, many of whom had breakthroughs long before Whitworth Scott. I will establish how women were accepted into the profession by looking at the reaction of the popular press at the time which will give a clearer picture of the issues Scott would have faced.

2.1 Education

Until the end of the nineteenth century most middle class girls were educated at home, unlike their brothers who were able to attend university. A career in architecture was still largely achieved by an articulated apprenticeship and many schools did not cater for the academic aspirations of girls and provided a generally poor level of academic standard with the emphasis on accomplishments. This led to many

smaller independent schools being set up for girls which would provide a more demanding academic curriculum, much like the school Whitworth Scott attended in Poole in Dorset.¹¹⁴

Access to education was important for many educational reformers but girls attending an average school from a working class background had fewer opportunities in terms of a career. A journalist in the *Bolton Evening News* wrote in 1928 that the general consensus amongst men at the time for a girl's education was that they should receive 'specialised training for married life'¹¹⁵ but he explained that, regardless of class, improvements in educating women should be extended throughout all schools, 'though they may be ever so ordinary, [their education] must be rich and varied . . . because genius may occur just as frequently among women as among men, if only our education system could draw it out.'¹¹⁶

2.2 Professional women

After the First World War, women had generally played a more passive role in professions but this passivity did not stop some individuals taking a more pioneering stance. At the time Whitworth Scott embarked on her architectural course in 1919, there had been a reappraisal of the women's role through the work of the suffrage movement and the twenties saw various female breakthroughs in a variety of professions.

¹¹⁴ Redmoor and Teesdale School, Cranford Cliffs, Poole, Dorset.

¹¹⁵ *Bolton Evening News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Mrs. Pankhurst had achieved notable successes in resurfacing the issue of voting for women after a limited voting franchise in 1918 and when Millicent Fawcett retired in 1919, Eleanor Rathbone (1872-1946) took over the presidency of the *National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship*.¹¹⁷ Through parliamentary lobbying she gained legislative goals, such as welfare benefits for married women and women's rights in India¹¹⁸ in parallel to other feminist reformers developing new social institutions to help the independent woman.¹¹⁹

In 1928 the Representation of the People Act came into force which lowered the voting age for women from 30 to 21, giving them equal suffrage with men. This did not create a united front as might be first imagined. Whereas men faced social divisions linked to ethnicity, religion or ideology, women faced problems specific to them such as between housewives and the working woman, married and unmarried, older and younger. This diversity of the women's cause explains why feminism was not focussed on one cause.¹²⁰

The Junior Council of the *London and National Society for Women's Service*,¹²¹ of which Whitworth Scott would later become a member,

¹¹⁷ Papers of Eleanor Rathbone, date 1929-1937, GB1067ELR, The Women's Library.

¹¹⁸ J. Black, *Modern British History since 1900*, Macmillan Press, London, 2000, p.115.

¹¹⁹ V. Chase, 'Edith Wharton – The Decoration of Houses, and gender', D. Coleman, E. Dance, C. Henderson, eds., *Architecture and Feminism*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1996, p. 135.

¹²⁰ J. Black, *Modern British History since 1900*, Macmillan Press, London, 2000, p.115.

¹²¹ 'The National Union of Women's Suffrage' began in 1866 and then became the 'London & National Society for Women's Service Group' working on a broad range of equality issues rather than being devoted to achieving the vote.

devoted its attention to the problems women faced in industrial and professional work at the time. It was a forerunner to the *Fawcett Society* which was renamed in 1953 after Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett¹²² who had been instrumental in achieving the vote for women.

Women had been paving the way for others like them long before Whitworth Scott's success in the competition in 1928. Six years earlier, in 1922, Carrie Morrison had been entered as the first female solicitor,¹²³ closely followed by the first woman to be called to the English Bar, Dr. Ivy Williams (1877-1966).¹²⁴ Earlier that year Aileen Cust had been admitted as a member of the *Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons*, after qualifying in 1900 but having to practise in Ireland before she was officially recognised.¹²⁵ Two years later in 1924, Dr. Christine Murrell (1874-1933) was the first female member of the *Council of the British Medical Association* and Ethel Watts was the first woman to pass the final examination of the *Institute of Chartered Accountants*.¹²⁶ Watts was also involved with the *Junior Council of the London and National Society for Women's Service* through which she would later meet Whitworth Scott.¹²⁷ This was also the decade that saw the first female Labour Cabinet Minister, the Rt. Hon. Margaret Bondfield.

¹²² Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847 – 1929) English suffragist and early feminist.

¹²³ *Leeds Mercury*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927 – 5 April 1928.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

Interior decoration and design were professions that could easily be filled by women in the twenties. Female arbiters of taste were generally rich, upper middle class women who were commissioned by the upper classes in society. The work of Syrie Maugham (1879-1955) and her rival Sybil Colefax (1874-1950) appeared in *Vogue* and *The Studio* initiating a streamlined aesthetic which helped to create the preconditions for the modernist interiors of the thirties.¹²⁸

Women were becoming more independent, undertaking professional training and setting up businesses on their own. They were travelling extensively and carving out new roles for themselves such as Ethel Mairet (1872-1952) an influential weaver who drew on colours and techniques she had picked up from her travels. The potter, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie (1895-1985), was influenced by the design enterprises of the Bloomsbury Group and worked from her pottery in Wiltshire. Claire Buckley in, *Designing Modern Britain*, described these women as:

. . . they were informed by modernist ideas. They, along with several others working in craft, believed that materials – whether old or new – had intrinsic qualities that demanded expression. They recognised that it was by means of a universal rather than a specific design language that contemporary life and experience were best expressed, and they searched for a new visual language that was abstract, non-representational and used decoration sparsely.¹²⁹

Whitworth Scott's entry into the professional world was by no means a first, but society was changing and there were other forces driving her

¹²⁸ C. Buckley, *Designing Modern Britain*, Reaktion Books, London, 2007, p.78.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

on. Other women had major breakthroughs in professions which in many ways made Whitworth Scott's route relatively straightforward.

2.3 Women in architecture

The idea of women having an input into architecture was not a new phenomenon. Although it was restricted to upper class women with leisure time and money, the seventeenth and eighteenth century saw women supervising site workers and the use of building materials.¹³⁰

The *Builder* suggested in 1861 that women could be trained to write architectural specifications in offices and *The Society for Promoting Employment of Women* felt that tracing was a possible role that women could take and *The Ladies Tracing Society* was founded in 1877 to provide a plan tracing service.¹³¹

Following architecture as a career, however, was something that women had not yet been privy to. In *Architecture and Feminism*, Vanessa Chase discusses Edith Wharton (1862-1937) who believed that the neglected arts of gardening and interior decoration should be integrated into the architectural discipline. She faced censure because, at the turn of the twentieth century, architecture was seen as a male

¹³⁰ L. Walker, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain', *Women's Art Journal*. Vol. 7, No.1, (Spring-Summer, 1986) p.13.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.15.

discipline, whereas gardening and interior decoration merely as women's diversions.¹³²

Although the constitution of the RIBA did not actively exclude women they were still not admitted until sixty-four years later. Male domination in the work force generally restricted women to home, marriage and motherhood¹³³ whereas architecture was a multi-faceted thing, a profession with many skills, 'an art with a dozen trades pinned to its skirts.'¹³⁴ Women were working in the profession rather than just being influential clients and a census taken in 1841, shows that there were nineteen female builders in London. By 1891 there were nineteen female architects in England and Wales and five in Scotland.¹³⁵ By 1935 there were nearly thirty five firms run entirely by women.¹³⁶

The most notable architectural achievement in Britain is that of Ethel May Charles (1871-1962) who became the first female member of the RIBA in 1898, followed by her sister Bessie Ada, who became the second in 1900. After being refused entry to the AA in 1893¹³⁷ the sisters were both articled to Ernest George (1839-1922) and Harold Peto (1854-1933). Ernest George specialised in architecture of a bygone era and his previous students had been Guy Dawber and Edwin

¹³² V. Chase, 'Edith Wharton – The Decoration of Houses and gender', D. Coleman, E. Dance, C. Henderson, eds., *Architecture and Feminism*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York 1996, p.133.

¹³³ L. Walker, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain', *Women's Art Journal*. Vol. 7, No.1, (Spring-Summer, 1986) p.17.

¹³⁴ *Evening News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

¹³⁵ L. Walker, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain', *Women's Art Journal*. Vol. 7, No.1, (Spring-Summer, 1986) p.15.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.17.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.16.

Lutyens. Ethel Charles worked for Arts & Crafts architect, Walter Cave, passed her RIBA examinations in 1898 and was nominated for Associate membership. The sisters then set up practice together and Ethel was awarded the Silver Medal for Architecture in 1906 after winning a competition for a German church, a competition she entered against 200 male architects.¹³⁸



Fig.20 Edith Gillian Cooke Harrison, Red Willows, Kent (c.1933)

Edith Gillian Cooke Harrison (1898-1974) was an architect who had advanced the role of women in architecture and who had established herself as a full member of the RIBA in 1931. She was responsible for the design of *Red Willows*, a brick house in Kent that was seen as being a typical interpretation of European modernism with clean lines, interconnected forms and a conventional floor plan.¹³⁹

Harrison must have been at the AA the same time as Whitworth Scott, but she had trained with other female graduates, Winifred Maddock (née Ryle), Eleanor Dorothy Hughes and Gertrude Leverkus, who graduated from the University of London and set up practice with

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.16.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

Eleanor Hughes. In 1932 Leverkus became Secretary of the newly formed RIBA Women's Committee which was intended as a ladies social club but under Leverkus' management it recorded cases of discrimination as well as advising and encouraging members.¹⁴⁰

Eileen Gray (1878-1976), although primarily a furniture designer and interior designer, moved into architecture under the influence of Le Corbusier and the encouragement of Romanian architect, Jean Badovici (1893-1956).



Fig.21 Eileen Gray, c.1925

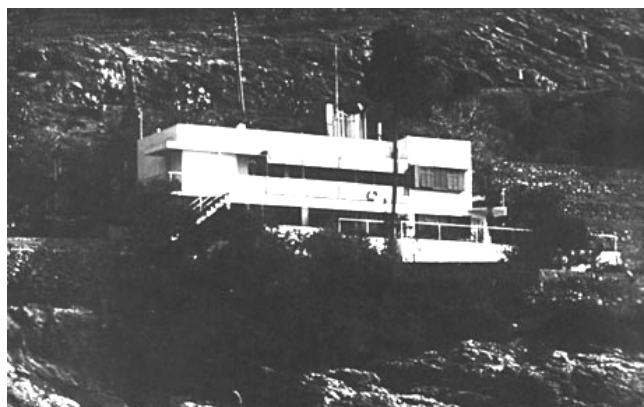


Fig.22 Eileen Gray, E1027, Roquebrune-Cap Martin (1926-29),

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.17.

Particularly notable was Gray's first significant building, E-1027 in the south of France and she later recalled, 'Badovici said to me: why don't you build? I laughed in his face. I had always loved architecture. More than anything. But I didn't think myself capable of it.'¹⁴¹



Fig.23 Charlotte Perriand and Le Corbusier, Rue de Sevres Studio, Paris

Charlotte Perriand (1903-1999) was also one of the few women to enter the male dominated world of avant-garde architecture. She worked from 1927 to 1937 with Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret and became head of the 'furniture equipment' division in their studio in Paris. Later she travelled widely, particularly Japan, which became a major source of inspiration to her work, as well as working with artist Fernand Léger (1881-1955) and architect and designer Jean Prouvé (1901-1984).

During an interview, Perriand defined her role as:

I'm not an architect. In 1938, after spending ten years with Corbu, I could have said I was an 'architect'. But when I came back from Japan in 1946, I would

¹⁴¹ C. Constant, *Eileen Gray*, Phaidon, London, 2007, p.67.

have had to pass before l'Ordre des Architectes – which is very academic – and I didn't want to do that'.¹⁴²

When asked if being a woman had made a significant difference to her work she replied:

I find the problem of 'being a woman' a bit unsettling, for the simple reason that I have never asked myself the question. . . . There is one thing I never did, and that was flirt. That is, I didn't 'dabble', I created and produced and my job was important. There was a mutual respect, mutual recognition.¹⁴³

For Perriand, it had never been a concern working alongside men and as they had never mentioned that it had been a problem working alongside her, she assumed that they either, 'had the delicacy not to tell me so' or they had no issue in the first place.

These women set the scene for Whitworth Scott's achievements, all achieving notable success in their careers in the early part of the twentieth century. While working for highly influential individuals they were carving out careers for themselves that would be influential to others but also possessing a more self-effacing attitude to their position.

2.3.1 Women architects specialising in domestic architecture

Even after the success of the Charles' architectural practice, Lynne Walker writing in the *Women's Art Journal* says that 'home design

¹⁴² H. Teicher, interview with Charlotte Perriand, 'Collective affinity', *Art Forum*, Summer 1999, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_10_37/ai_55015165.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

remained the socially sanctioned sphere for women architects.¹⁴⁴ The home was seen as a reflection of women and men knew little of the intricacies that were needed in the design of a home, 'Men inhabit houses, women live in them, and the immense and avoidable shortcomings of the ordinary home of the past were mainly masculine work.'¹⁴⁵ A journalist from the *Daily Mirror* admitted that he expected women architects to specialise in domestic architecture and was surprised to find that they did not, 'It is the men who go in for 'homework'. The women seem to prefer the complicated mathematics of factory construction.'¹⁴⁶

The North Shields Daily Gazette supposed that the introduction of female architects would show an improvement in domestic architecture. The article explained that although a house is, 'architecturally considered small', it was just as important and a woman's point of view would improve the design, 'Women suitable [sic] trained, ought to be able to contribute ideas that will put the domestic life on more common sense lines that is the case now.'¹⁴⁷ Taking a different view, the *Builder* asked whether it should be expected for female architects entering the profession to become experts in domestic architecture, 'Do they believe that men have never washed up a single dish or indeed realise the importance of a cupboard in a kitchen?'¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ L. Walker, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain', *Women's Art Journal*. Vol. 7, No.1, (Spring-Summer, 1986) p.16.

¹⁴⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927 – 5 April 1928.

¹⁴⁶ *Daily Mirror*, 14 September, 1928, T.R., Vol. 22, 6 April 1928 – 24 April 1929.

¹⁴⁷ *North Shields Daily News*, 6 January, 1928, Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927 – 5 April 1928.

¹⁴⁸ 'Women in Architecture', *Builder*, 27 January, 1928.

Architect, Gertrude Leverkus,¹⁴⁹ felt that although women architects seemed to specialise in domestic architecture, ‘they have also carried out hospital, churches, factories, welfare centres, almshouses . . . as well of course, as the Stratford Memorial Theatre’. For her, the greatest drawback for women architects was, ‘the lack of precedent, which makes it an extraordinary thing for a woman to be trusted with large, important work.’¹⁵⁰

2.3.2 The acceptability of women in architecture

Although the built environment in twenties and thirties Britain was still dominated, defined and designed by men, the *Builder* pointed out that women were firmly established in architecture, ‘and they are welcome there.’¹⁵¹ There was an acknowledgement that the RIBA were taking notice of the training of women but they still had to earn the ARIBA and FRIBA as it was a ‘fair field’.¹⁵²

The opinion in the popular press was that the female student architect was more conscientious than her male counterpart and that she was more likely to concentrate on points of detail, ‘and less ready to let her imagination take wings.’¹⁵³ The author of ‘Women in Architecture’ in the *Builder* wrote that middle class girls entering architectural schools ‘enter

¹⁴⁹ Gertrude Leverkus (1899-1976) (Papers of Gertrude Leverkus, date: 1976, GB01067/GLE, The Women’s Library).

¹⁵⁰ L. Walker, ‘The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain’, *Women’s Art Journal*. Vol. 7, No.1, (Spring-Summer, 1986) p.17.

¹⁵¹ ‘Women in Architecture’, *Builder*, 27 January, 1928.

¹⁵² *Evening News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

¹⁵³ ‘Women in Architecture’, *Builder*, 27 January, 1928.

architecture with ambitions like their brothers of the T-square; if they are to make a success of life they should come into architecture because they love it.¹⁵⁴

The realms of architecture had been the domain of men, 'sacrosanct, holy ground whereupon none but the feet of man might tread.'¹⁵⁵ The *North Eastern Daily Gazette* told its readers that females had the same intellectual attainments that would match any man's and she was able to demonstrate that 'modern Eve can successfully challenge man's dominion'.¹⁵⁶

There was also a core that were very resentful of women entering the profession and any success was met with, 'Jealous males, who grudge their victories to women, read the news and gnash their teeth over it!'¹⁵⁷ The *Evening News* had no hesitation in allowing their columnist to write, 'There are jobs which are men's jobs because men are more fit for them'.¹⁵⁸ Architecture was, on the one hand, a job suitable for women, because regardless of any skill or training, there were few physical limitations as, 'He may sit or stand to it; the strength of his arm avails little.'¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, even though women thought themselves physically capable, the columnist explained that there were many jobs

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *North Eastern Daily Gazette*, 6 Jan, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Evening News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

linked to architecture through the building trade that were male dominated because of women's physical limitations:

Carpentry is work for him and so, I think are all those perilous jobs which are done with ladders and scaffolding. The plumber – I doubt if any restless woman could settle to a plumber's contemplative task. At house-painting and paper hanging a woman might work as neatly and swiftly as any man. Yet the paper-hanger and the house painter must stand to their work; I have a belief that it is not good for a woman's body to stand too long in one place. So it comes that most of the work of building the house must needs be a man's job; nature has ordered it so.¹⁶⁰

Similarly the correspondent from the *North Eastern Daily Gazette* reacted to the press release of the successful winner of the theatre competition with, 'In physical prowess equality of the sexes can never be established'¹⁶¹ and then illustrated his objection with references to the successes of female cross-Channel swimmers, female athletes and the aviator, Amy Johnson, whose accomplishments against men were only achieved by 'a freak performance'.¹⁶²

Not long after the build started on the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, a Midland architect who did not want to be named, contacted the *Birmingham Dispatch* and doubted whether female architects, 'possess the ability to concentrate. Then are they always capable enough to direct builders – and what about climbing ladders?' His apparent disapproval of a female architect led him to remember a saying, 'A reasonable woman is as rare as a white magpie'.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *North Eastern Daily Gazette*, 6 Jan, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 11 Feb, 1930, T.R., Vol. 23, 25 May 1929 – 24 April 1930.

Conclusion

The end of the First World War brought about changes to the way society treated females in the educational system. Women were able to gain access to higher education that would take them further into a career if they so wished. Although it was still early days for women to make much impact in professions but there is evidence that it was starting and they were proving to be just as effective as men. Various professions had already seen many female-firsts and architecture already had its fair share of early pioneers and their success was all the more remarkable at a time when society was only just coming to terms with changes in style, changes in economic fortune and changes in attitude to women in the home and the workplace.

In this chapter, I look at the history of the Architectural Association (AA) and consider the reputation and skills of the members of staff, many of whom were established architects, artists and designers. I will explore how certain individuals shaped the syllabus which will give an insight into the specific influences on Whitworth Scott's work. I will then introduce the reading list that was recommended by the Architectural Association which helps to illustrate how early Whitworth Scott's learning was in the history of modernism and how it is more probable that certain members of staff and her peers had more of an effect on her modernist principles.

3.1 The history of the Architectural Association

Prior to the First World War there was increasing demand for a formal method of teaching architecture because at the time the pupil-architect would supplement his work in a supervised office with the attendance at evening classes in perspective, sketching and architectural detailing. However, these classes were voluntary and held no professional status, so a group of dissatisfied draughtsmen set up the Association for Architectural Draughtsmen in 1842. This was still not a solution as it held no classes or formal instruction so from this, in 1847, The

Architectural Association was established by a 'pack of troublesome students,'¹⁶⁴ most notably Robert Kerr¹⁶⁵ and Charles Grey.

The AA flourished and was formally established in 1890 with a day school added in 1901, making it the oldest, independent school of architecture in the United Kingdom.¹⁶⁶ Sheffield established a School of Art in 1892, closely followed by the Liverpool School in 1895.¹⁶⁷

Architects were no longer happy relying solely on an apprenticeship being served with an architectural practice and a process of standardising the formal education took place to ensure that students followed the same curriculum. Based on the assumption that the syllabus fulfilled certain conditions, the AA and Liverpool were made exempt from the RIBA Intermediate examination in 1902. Although The Board of Architectural Training was established by the RIBA in 1904 to devise a syllabus that co-ordinated training, it did not come into effect until 1913.¹⁶⁸

The numbers of students in architectural schools reduced dramatically during the First World War, but by the end there was a flood of candidates seeking professional qualifications and architectural schools grew in numbers and prestige. There was no statutory entrance exam

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.aaschool.ac.uk>, [February, 2008]

¹⁶⁵ Robert Kerr (1823-1904) Scottish architect and writer. He became the first President of the AA, as well as an examiner at the RIBA. R. Dixon & S. Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2001, p.32.

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.aaschool.ac.uk>, [February, 2008]

¹⁶⁷ T. Howarth, 'Background to Architectural Education', *Journal of Architectural Education (1947-1974)*, Vol.14, No.2, ACSA-AIA Seminar: *The Teaching of Architecture* (Autumn 1959), pp.25-30.

¹⁶⁸ M. Crinson & J. Lubbock, *Architecture – art or profession? Three hundred years of architectural education in Britain*, Manchester University Press, 1994, p.60.

to be accepted into the AA, although the prospective students were expected to have achieved a good standard of education which would equal an Oxford or Cambridge Senior Local Examination or the London Matriculation Examination.¹⁶⁹

Initially the school had only admitted male students who were already members of the AA. Women, on the other hand, could only be admitted to the School but not join the Association as many of the members were on active service in the First World War.¹⁷⁰ An edition of the *Builder* referred to a speech made in 1902 by Ethel Charles, who addressed the AA on the rules of admittance, 'It is not a case of men versus women; it is a case of individual capability and aptitude'.¹⁷¹ It was not until 1917, two years prior to Whitworth Scott starting her studies that the rules of admission changed.

In *Architecture – art or profession?*, Mark Crinson explains that the Arts and Crafts movement had a strong influence on early architectural education when the supporters were trying 'to locate the architect in the camp of the sculptor and painter, rather than in that of the engineer and contractor'.¹⁷² The Arts and Crafts school of thinking had gained control of Birmingham School of Architecture, Liverpool, the AA and schools set up by London County Council. Many of the courses had to be

¹⁶⁹ Architectural Association, *Prospectus*, Session 1919-1920.

¹⁷⁰ J. Summerson, *The Architectural Association, 1847-1947*, Pleiades Books Ltd., London, 1947, p.42.

¹⁷¹ L. Walker, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain', *Women's Art Journal*. Vol. 7, No.1, (Spring-Summer, 1986) p.13.

¹⁷² M. Crinson & J. Lubbock, *Architecture – art or profession? Three hundred years of architectural education in Britain*, Manchester University Press, 1994, p.65.

compromised to fulfil both the ethos of the Arts and Crafts as well as the more stringent requirements of the RIBA. Emphasis was placed on artistic representations of designs with little attention to detailed construction drawings or perspectives and additional teaching enabled the student to experience building crafts and building materials.¹⁷³

Initially, the AA committee was dominated by Arts and Crafts professionals and students were trained in building crafts and were taught a wide variety of building-related disciplines.¹⁷⁴ However, the influence and interest in the Arts and Crafts was facing a decline as the battle for the Beaux-arts was also being played out¹⁷⁵ which gives a clearer picture of the status of the curriculum and the preferences of the staff just prior to Whitworth Scott's enrolment.

3.2 President and Advisory Council

When Whitworth Scott enrolled at the AA in 1919, the President of the AA was architect Maurice Webb (1880-1939) who had started his architectural career working with his father, Sir Aston Webb (1849-1930). The Vice President at the time was Whitworth Scott's cousin, Giles Gilbert Scott. Scott took over the Presidency 1920-21 while Whitworth Scott was a student.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.66.

¹⁷⁴ Training from the London County Council Central School and the Carpenters Company Trades Training School based at Great Titchfield Street. *Ibid.*, p.71.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.72.

¹⁷⁶ Presidents at the Architectural Association while Whitworth Scott was student: 1919-20 Maurice Webb; 1920-21 G. Gilbert Scott; 1921-22 W.G. Newton; 1922-23

The Advisory Council included Sir Reginald Blomfield, who had trained with his uncle before attending the Royal Academy. He disliked John Ruskin and William Morris, calling them ornamenters, and was known for despising the onslaught of modernism. Instead, he preferred the work of Philip Webb (1831-1915) and Norman Shaw (1831-1912) who had revived the use of vernacular materials and restrained detailing with a style that ran a close parallel to the Arts & Crafts movement.

Blomfield contributed to Shaw's *Architecture; A Profession or Art*¹⁷⁷ which included short essays on the qualifications and training of architecture from others such as G.F. Bodley and W.R. Lethaby.

E.Guy Dawber (1861-1938), also on the Council of the AA and would later take the role of drawing up the brief for the Memorial Theatre competition as well as leading the panel of assessors. Alongside him sat William Curtis Green (1875-1960) who had worked on Letchworth Garden City and lectured on Modern Housing. His lectures ran in parallel to those of Barry Parker (1867-1947), of Parker and Unwin,¹⁷⁸ who was the Town Planning lecturer. Parker had also worked on Letchworth as well as being invited to work on the design of Hampstead Garden Suburb. Parker and Unwin's simple vernacular style aimed to popularise the Arts & Crafts movement as well as improve housing

Stanley Hamp; 1923-24 E Stanley Hall; 1924-1925 H.S. Goodhart-Rendel.
<http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/downloads/AA%20Past%20Presidents.pdf>

¹⁷⁷ R.N. Shaw, ed., *Architecture; A Profession or Art: Thirteen short essays on the qualifications and training of architecture*, Murray, London, 1892.

¹⁷⁸ Parker set up a partnership with Raymond Unwin (1863-1941) in 1896 in Buxton, Derbyshire. Unwin married Parker's sister, Ethel. S. Bayley, *The Garden City*, The Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1975, pp.28-30.

conditions for the working classes and as a result thousands of homes were built to their pattern in the early twentieth century. Whitworth Scott's attendance at these lectures would have gone a long way to assisting her later work with Louis de Soissons on the layout plans for Welwyn Garden City.

Sir Edwin Lutyens was the last member of the Advisory Council and a well established, respected and hugely influential architect. He had been involved with the model estates backed by the philanthropists Cadbury and Lever who were responsible for Bournville (1879) and Port Sunlight (1889) respectively. The estates employed a mixture of architectural styles relying on traditional vernacular and domestic styles of the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries with barge boards, sash windows, black and white half-timbering and red brick.¹⁷⁹ Lutyens had made his name as an Arts & Crafts architect with the design of Munstead Wood in Surrey (1896) for the garden designer Gertrude Jekyll, where he used local materials and traditional forms.¹⁸⁰ He later shifted his emphasis towards a more classical stance between the turn of the century and the twenties, leading to work on two churches in Hampstead Garden Suburb where Whitworth Scott's future employer, Maurice Chesterton, worked extensively. After Lutyens had completed his work in New Delhi, he worked for the Imperial War Graves Commission for the First World War.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ C. Buckley, *Designing Modern Britain*, Reaktion Books, London, 2007, p.23.

¹⁸⁰ E. Cumming & W. Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2004, p.48

¹⁸¹ C. Buckley, *Designing Modern Britain*, Reaktion Books, London, 2007, p.67.

3.3 The Principal

Robert Atkinson (1883-1952) had been a lecturer in architectural design in 1911 and had then accepted the post of Principal in 1913. He remained in this post for the time Whitworth Scott was a student and would later be on the judging panel of the theatre competition, along with architect Robert Lowry who was his Deputy. Although Atkinson was a product of the Edwardian era he also held a well-informed attitude to style and history.¹⁸² As an established architect, he did not have a particular distinctive personal style in his work¹⁸³ but by contrast, in his role as a teacher at the AA, he was happy to encourage his students to follow a new direction and introduced new ideas into the curriculum.

In 1926, Atkinson collaborated with the AA librarian and professional acoustician, Hope Bagenal on *Theory and Elements of Architecture*.¹⁸⁴ This four volume work was a text book on architecture that, as the authors described it, would be, 'a history of structure and a method of teaching design.'¹⁸⁵ One criticism was that since it was so lavishly produced the price of the book put it out of reach of the average student.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² A. Powers, 'Robert Atkinson and the Architectural Association', ed. P. Spencer-Longhurst, *Robert Atkinson 1883-1952*, Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.13.

¹⁸³ G. Stamp, 'Robert Atkinson', ed. P. Spencer-Longhurst, *Robert Atkinson 1883-1952*, Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.5.

¹⁸⁴ A. Powers, 'Robert Atkinson and the Architectural Association', ed. P. Spencer-Longhurst, *Robert Atkinson 1883-1952*, Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.20.

¹⁸⁵ M.S. Briggs, 'Review: The Theory of Architecture', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 50, No.289, (April, 1927), p.218.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.219.

After fifteen years, Atkinson retired as Director of Education in 1926 and Alan Powers summed up his time at the AA:

His time at the AA was a complicated, transitional period, when schools were divided over modernism. As an educationalist he gave shape and form to this period, which is still very little admired and even less understood.¹⁸⁷

Howard Robertson was Principal for the larger part of Whitworth Scott's time at the AA. He was in the post from 1920 to 1932 (Whitworth Scott graduated 1924), when he then took up the post of Director of Education until 1935. It was under his leadership and his collaborative work with F.R. Yerbury that the AA fully embraced modernism.

Atkinson's co-author, Hope Bagenal, would have proved a strong influence on Whitworth Scott, not only as librarian of the AA where she would have come into contact with him on a regular basis, but he also later advised her on the acoustic design of the theatre. He was seen as being representative of the AA's outlook on architectural style as well as having liberal social views. His skill was based very firmly in ideas about construction which led him to be critical of some of the aspects of modernism and, although he was curious about the new style of architecture, it did not surpass his interest in the Arts & Crafts. Alan Powers refers to Hope Bagenal as being 'rather a guru by many students of his generation.'¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ A. Powers, 'Robert Atkinson and the Architectural Association', ed. P. Spencer-Longhurst, *Robert Atkinson 1883-1952*, Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.20.

¹⁸⁸ Email from A.Powers to author, 'Postgraduate Research', Thursday, 14 February 2008.

3.4 The Masters

At the time Whitworth Scott was a student, the body of staff largely consisted of those who either influenced, taught or worked with each other.¹⁸⁹ Some were involved at various stages on the model estates and the garden cities, where Whitworth Scott would work upon graduating, with strong influences on the Arts & Crafts movement and classical architecture. This vernacular, 'English', persuasion was evident in the curriculum and it seems that only Robert Atkinson introduced a new way of thinking for the students.

Those who ran their own businesses or practices outside the day School¹⁹⁰ included the architect L.H. Bucknell, responsible for Communal Planning and Housing, subjects Whitworth Scott would later be interested in, who had a distinguished career designing classical and modernist buildings.¹⁹¹ Walter Monckton Keesey (ARIBA, ARCA, b.1887) worked as an architect and illustrator away from the AA and taught art and decorative subjects. H.L. Cabuche had the title of lecturing in 'Practical Decoration' while also working extensively with Reginald Blomfield on Barkers department store on Kensington High Street for many years.

¹⁸⁹ The remainder were made up of architect E.H. Evans, 1st year course; P.H. Farmer, Construction and Business Subjects; H.M. Robertson, Architecte Diplômé and Architect, New York State – Atelier. Architectural Association, *Prospectus*, Session 1919-1920.

¹⁹⁰ Other lecturers included, F. Broadhurst Craig, MIHVE, Ventilation, Lighting and Heating; R.B. Mann, FSI, Quantities, Pricing and Estimating; C.E. Varndell, FRIBA, Construction and Surveying. *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ A. Powers, 'Robert Atkinson and the Architectural Association', *Robert Atkinson, 1883-1952*, ed. P. Spencer-Longhurst, Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.16.

Whitworth Scott attended lectures for ferro-concrete and steel construction by Oscar Faber (1886-1956), a well known civil electrical and mechanical engineer who made his reputation designing reinforced concrete structures and who ran his own consultancy outside of the AA. Lectures in Greek and Roman architecture were given by Theodore Fyfe (1875-1945), who had studied at the Glasgow School of Art and won a travelling scholarship to the British School in Athens, working at Knossos and Crete ensuring he was more than qualified. Prior to his appointment with the AA he had served his apprenticeship with Sir Aston Webb.

Finally, H. Davis Richter¹⁹² had worked as a successful designer but at the age of 32 had transferred his enrolment to the *London School of Art* and launched a successful career as an artist. There he combined his interior design skills in lectures on Historic and Modern Decoration and Furnishings which would later assist Whitworth Scott in her work with Oliver Hill and the interiors of the Memorial Theatre.

3.5 The Reading List

Whitworth Scott soon discovered that the first year for students at the AA was intended to give students preliminary training in history of architecture and construction and to establish their success in

¹⁹² Herbert Davis Richter (1874-1955) brought up in Lansdown, Bath. Enrolled at the Lambeth School of Art initially but thought they were too serious, so transferred to the London School of Art who he felt had a younger outlook.
<http://dl.lib.brown.edu:8081/exist/mjp/plookup.xq?id=RichterHerbert>

progressing to years two and three. Various books were recommended, some of which were either provided in the well stocked library, others, the students had to supply for themselves.

3.5.1 History

The booklist displayed a preference for ancient history, which was currently very fashionable at the time through recent archaeological finds. Later in her career, Whitworth Scott justified her architectural design skills from having an interest and knowledge of architectural history which she could only have got from the AA. The choice for the book list started with *The Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt*¹⁹³ by London University's Professor of Egyptology, W.M.F. Petrie¹⁹⁴ and *Crete, The Forerunner of Greece* by the husband and wife team, Charles Henry and Harriet Hawes.¹⁹⁵ The Professor of Art & Archaeology at the University of Princeton, Dr. Allan Marquand (1853-1924), had written the comprehensive *Greek Architecture*¹⁹⁶ which also covered materials and construction, proportion, decoration, composition, style and monuments.

The British Museum was situated near to the AA and made an ideal resource for research into the antiquities by publishing guides to their

¹⁹³ W.F. Petrie, *The Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt*, T.N. Foulis, London & Edinburgh, 1910.

¹⁹⁴ William Matthew Flanders Petrie (1853-1942) archaeologist and collector of Egyptian artefacts at the University College London where it is still housed. *Ibid.*, Preface.

¹⁹⁵ C.H. Hawes (1867-1943) & H.B. Hawes. *Crete, the Forerunner of Greece*, Harper & Bros, London and New York, 1909.

¹⁹⁶ A. Marquand, *Greek Architecture*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1909.

collections. One such guide was to the exhibition of *Greek and Roman Life*,¹⁹⁷ which illustrated armour, coins, musical instruments and medicine, along with a guide to their Egyptian collection.¹⁹⁸ The Keeper of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, Henry Beauchamp Walters (1867-1944), also produced the book *Art of the Romans*.¹⁹⁹

Another recommendation was the work of French archaeologist, Salomon Reinach (1858-1932), *Apollo; An Illustrated Manual of the History of Art Through the Ages*.²⁰⁰ The weighty volume was a collection of Reinach's series of lectures at the École du Louvre in 1902 and 1903,²⁰¹ which outlined the origins of art from Egypt and Persia, through Minoan, Greek, Roman and Gothic. Modern Architecture was to be found at the end following the palazzi of Florence, Milan and Venice and London's Banqueting House and St Paul's. Reinach wrote, 'Then two Belgian architects, Hankar and Horta, ventured, towards the year 1893, to apply equally bold principles to external decoration, waging war upon imitation and breaking with all tradition.'²⁰² Reinach was referring to Paul Hankar's (1859-1901) own house, Maison Hankar, and Victor Horta's (1861-1947) Hôtel Tassel, both in Brussels, which are considered to be the first Art Nouveau buildings in the world. Reinach also mentioned the Austrian, Otto Wagner, who became

¹⁹⁷ *A Guide to the Exhibition of Greek and Roman Life*, British Museum, London, 1920.

¹⁹⁸ *A Guide to the Egyptian Collections in the British Museum*, Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, British Museum, London, 1909.

¹⁹⁹ H.B. Walters (1867-1944), *Art of the Romans*, Macmillan, New York, date unknown.

²⁰⁰ S. Reinach, *Apollo; An Illustrated Manual of the History of Art Through the Ages*, Charles Scribners & Sons, New York, April 1907.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Preface, p.ix.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p.147.

‘acquainted with this Belgian movement’. Reinach described the school of construction in Vienna, ‘to which the term ‘Secessionist’ was applied, a name which sufficiently indicates its independent and even rebellious character’.²⁰³

Reinach goes on to say that ‘this heresy’ spread to Berlin, Darmstadt and Paris, but was relieved it did not manage to manifest itself into a public building. It is hard to read this account of modern architecture without wondering if Whitworth Scott read the same and how this would have influenced her. Reinach ended the chapter with his summary of modern architecture:

To define this new Anglo-Austrian-Belgian style would be almost impossible because it has no credo, and seeks its way in very diverse directions. But its existence is a well established fact, which proclaims itself in the dispositions and arrangement of private buildings. In its determination to belong to its own time, to reject anachronisms, it is related, in spite of individual aberrations, to the great programme of good sense and good taste laid down by Viollet-le-Duc.²⁰⁴

Other, less intensive, history books were *The Architecture of the Renaissance in Italy* by William James Anderson (1864-1900)²⁰⁵ and the work of William Henry Ward, *The Architecture of the Renaissance in France 1495-1830*, which was a history of the evolution of the arts of building, decoration and garden design under the classical influence.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.148.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ W.J. Anderson (1864-1900), *The Architecture of the Renaissance in Italy*, BT Batsford, London, 1898.

²⁰⁶ W.H. Ward (1865-1924), *The Architecture of the Renaissance in France 1495-1830*. BT Batsford, London, 1911.

A more recent history book recommendation, which also related to the ever present vernacular style, was also by a member of staff. Teaching the traditional style was important to the AA and Guy Dawber had written *Old Cottages and Farmhouses in Kent and Sussex* in 1900. The Introduction to the book explained that the more humble phases of architecture were being overlooked and that there was a lot to learn from the vernacular, 'It is therefore amongst the smaller and more homely buildings standing modestly by the wayside that we must look to find work conceived and carried out by English hands.'²⁰⁷ It would have given Whitworth Scott an introduction as well as an appreciation of the more disregarded elements of architecture but something that would have appealed to her appreciation of things more rural and another nod to the Arts & Crafts movement.

3.5.2 Technical Drawing

*Architectural Shades and Shadows*²⁰⁸ was a course produced by an instructor of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, Henry McGoodwin. The work acted as a pattern book for the technical construction of shading for common architectural forms. Edward Johnston's *Writing and Illuminating and Lettering*²⁰⁹ was chosen to improve the student's calligraphy skills which were imperative, as

²⁰⁷ E.G. Dawber, *Old Cottages and Farmhouses in Kent and Sussex*, BT Batsford, London, 1900, p.8.

²⁰⁸ H. McGoodwin, *Architectural Shades and Shadows*, Bates & Guild Company, Boston, 1904.

²⁰⁹ Edward Johnston (1872-1944) seen as the 'father of calligraphy'. He is most famous for his Sans-Serif Johnston typeface which was, and still is, used throughout the London Underground. E. Johnston, *Writing and Illuminating and Lettering*, Macmillan, New York, October 1906.

Johnston explained, ‘as the old fashioned notion that *a legible hand is a mark of bad breeding* dies out, it may be that our current handwriting will take legibility and beauty from such practice.’²¹⁰ The book was edited by W.R. Lethaby (1857-1931) who was a prominent Arts & Crafts architect and he wrote in the *Preface*, ‘There is here a collection of all sorts of lettering; some sensible and many eccentric, for us to choose from, but we are shown the essentials of form and spacing.’²¹¹ In contradiction, Colin Cunningham points out in his article on the ‘cultural schizophrenia’ of tastes in architectural training, that Lethaby was known for criticising the rote learned facts of construction and historical style²¹² but Alan Powers points out that high quality draughtsmanship was a prized skill, and the AA produced a high number of fine draughtsmen and perspectivists particularly, Oliver Hill.²¹³

3.6 Influence of Modernism at the Architectural Association

The influence of modernism at the AA was not particularly strong until towards the end of the thirties, long after Whitworth Scott had faded from the public scene. The students experienced elements of modernism from the efforts of the Principal, Robert Atkinson, who although did not embrace the modern movement, Gavin Stamp explains that, he did not stand in the way of his students progress and, ‘rose to

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.xiv.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.xi.

²¹² C. Cunningham, ‘A Case of Cultural Schizophrenia: Ruling Tastes and Architectural Training in the Edwardian Period’, *Architectural History*, Vol. 44, SAHGB Publications Ltd., (2001), p.67.

²¹³ A. Powers, ‘Edwardian Architectural Education: A Study of Three Schools of Architecture’, *AA Files*, January, 1984, pp.49-59.

the challenge of new building types'.²¹⁴ Students would have experienced modernism through trips abroad and by the architectural photography of the Association Secretary, F.R. Yerbury.

Unfortunately, AA students who later committed their work to the Modern Movement described the curriculum as uninspiring. Two of these were the landscape architect, Geoffrey Jellicoe, and the architectural writer, James Richards (1907-1992), who went on to become the longest serving editor at the *Architectural Review* from 1937 to 1971. Another former student, Elizabeth Chesterton (daughter of Maurice Chesterton), explained that she and her colleagues 'adjusted to ourselves' the needs of the curriculum.²¹⁵ However, under Atkinson's control, the AA's education in architectural design provided a basis for non-architectural careers as well as architectural and also enabled architecture to be a matter for greater public awareness.²¹⁶

By 1927 Gilbert H. Jenkins had taken over the Presidency of the AA and with it Atkinson's legacy of modernism. In his essay, 'Politics of Architecture', Anthony Jackson explained, 'So while the work at the Association was quite conventional the atmosphere was not.' Jenkins was not happy and virulently attacked the new architectural style in the *Architectural Association Journal*:

²¹⁴ G. Stamp, 'Robert Atkinson', ed. P. Spencer-Longhurst, *Robert Atkinson 1883-1952*, Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.6.

²¹⁵ 'Interview with Dame Elizabeth Chesterton', Interviewed by Louise Brodie, *National Life Story Collections*, British Library, Created October 1997, 021A-C0467X0025XX-0300A0, [7 July, 2008]

²¹⁶ A. Powers, 'Robert Atkinson and the Architectural Association', ed. P. Spencer-Longhurst, *Robert Atkinson 1883-1952*, Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.19.

A French exponent of modernism has built a plate glass box to form one of these new abodes – one could not conceive it as a home for anyone save a vegetarian bacteriologist.²¹⁷

In opposition, and perhaps more in line with the current feeling at the AA, lecturer and former student R.A. Duncan exclaimed that, if he [Duncan] were to take the same view as Mr. Jenkins, he ‘would commit suicide.’²¹⁸ Duncan explained that the introduction of new ideas had already been embedded under the leadership of Atkinson, along with ‘a somewhat restricted, outlook of the English Domestic tradition.’²¹⁹

Conclusion

The Architectural Association was a well established, accredited school under the RIBA when Whitworth Scott enrolled. Although the majority of staff were from the more traditional Arts and Crafts backgrounds, there was an element that welcomed in the changes from abroad and encouraged students to create their own stylistic paths. It is now apparent that Whitworth Scott was a student just as the AA’s stylistic changes were beginning and she would have encountered the Principal, Robert Atkinson and the librarian, Hope Bagenal, who would have created an aura of confidence in this new approach to architecture.

²¹⁷ ‘Modernism in Architecture’, *Architectural Association Journal*, XLIII, 1927, p.160.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.169.

²¹⁹ A. Powers, ‘Robert Atkinson and the Architectural Association’, ed. P. Spencer-Longhurst, *Robert Atkinson 1883-1952*, Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.16.

The reading list appears narrow and constrained, concentrating on ancient and classical architecture in particular. Whitworth Scott was not yet able to draw on more modernist publications and her understanding of modern architecture was not formally learned. I have demonstrated that any major changes to the curriculum occurred after Whitworth Scott had graduated.

The time Whitworth Scott spent at the AA allowed her to make connections that may have been beneficial later in her career. The Principal, Robert Atkinson was part of the judging panel for the theatre and Guy Dawber, who sat on the Council for the AA drew up the competition brief.

As little is known about Whitworth Scott, this chapter will explore her family background and particularly her influential relations and what impact they had on her career as an architect. By documenting her education and her time at the AA, where after five years of being an unexceptional student, she left in 1924 with her diploma, it will give an insight into her architectural abilities and her suitability for being a pioneering woman architect.

I will discuss the next three years of her architectural career in the employ of Wigglesworth & Niven, Louis de Soissons and Oliver Hill before joining Maurice Chesterton to give an insight into the variety of expertise she would have experienced. I explore aspects of her professional relationships and how her background prepared her for the success of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.

4.1 Whitworth Scott's family

Elizabeth Whitworth Scott was born in Bournemouth on 20 September 1898²²⁰ into a distinguished medical family. In nearly ninety years since its foundation in 1810, Bournemouth had become a premier health spa. In Dr Horace Dobell's *The Medical Aspects of Bournemouth and Its*

²²⁰ 1901 Census, *National Archives*, <http://www.1901census.nationalarchives.gov.uk>.

Surroundings he states that 'During my career as a London Physician I always knew Bournemouth as a place where patients would be certain to receive unusually good care from local practitioners.'²²¹



Fig.24 Elizabeth Whitworth Scott

Whitworth Scott was the fourth daughter of Bernard Scott (born in Brighton in 1860), who qualified in the MRCS and LSA at Guys Hospital in London in 1881.²²² He was the first cousin of Captain Thomas Bodley Scott, a former mayor of Dover and Speaker of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports.²²³ Following a period of time working at Sussex County Hospital in Brighton, Whitworth Scott's father moved to Bournemouth and practised from the family home, 'Hartington' on Poole Road before setting up a nursing home in

²²¹ H. Dobell, *The Medical Aspects of Bournemouth and Its Surroundings*, Smith, Elder & Co., 1885, 1st Ed.xii.

²²² *Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons and Licence of the Society of Apothecaries*.

²²³ <http://www.cinqueports.org>, [June, 2008]

'Stagsden' on West Cliff Road. He later moved his family into the attractive cliff top house of 'Fair Lea' next door. 'Stagsden' was Bournemouth's leading surgical nursing home run by the medical Scott family and it led to the founding of a medical practice which remains in practice to this day.²²⁴

Less is known of Whitworth Scott's mother, Lydia Whitworth, who was born in Knotty Ash, Liverpool in 1868.²²⁵ Her family moved to the Lake District where a former resident described Lydia as, 'a charming girl, who had a happy influence on young boys in Sunday School.'²²⁶ According to an article in the *Westmoreland Gazette*, Lydia's mother, Whitworth Scott's grandmother, worked 'for the good of Bowness village' and was involved with the district nurse fund.²²⁷ Lydia Whitworth married Bernard Scott at Windermere Parish Church.²²⁸

Whitworth Scott's father, Bernard, was the tenth child of the Brighton doctor Samuel King Scott (1818-1865) who was the brother of the Victorian architect Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878). Sir George Gilbert Scott was the father to architects John Oldrid Scott and George Gilbert Scott Jr. This made Giles Gilbert Scott and Adrian Gilbert Scott, sons of George Jr, Whitworth Scott's second cousins.

²²⁴ James Fisher, *The Origins of the Practice*, <http://www.westbournemedical.com>, [December, 2007]

²²⁵ 1901 Census, National Archives.

²²⁶ *Westmoreland Gazette*, 14 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.*



Fig.25 Sir George Gilbert Scott



Fig.26 Sir Giles Gilbert Scott

Bernard's elder brother was Thomas Bodley Scott (1851-1924), who had qualified at St Barts before setting up practice in Bournemouth and later became Mayor of Bournemouth. Thomas Bodley Scott was also a close friend of the Scottish author, Robert Louis Stevenson writer of *Treasure Island* (1883) and *Kidnapped* (1886), who spent time under medical care in Bournemouth for suspected tuberculosis. Thomas' son, Sir Ronald Bodley Scott, went on to become a consultant at St. Bart's

before becoming Queen Victoria's physician. Whitworth Scott's paternal grandmother was the sister of George Frederick Bodley (1827-1907) who was a direct descendent of the founder of the Bodleian Library, Sir Thomas Bodley (1545-1613).²²⁹



Fig.27 Sir George Frederick Bodley

Whitworth Scott had three older sisters, Ellen, Henrietta (Hetty) and Mary Hamilton. She also had three brothers, Maitland, the eldest, an older brother by three years, Bernard, who was killed in the First World War and George, who was the youngest.²³⁰

Little detail is known of Whitworth Scott's siblings apart from her eldest brother Maitland (1887-1942), (not to be confused with his cousin Maitland Bodley Scott who was also in general practice in Bournemouth) who also qualified at Guy's like his father.²³¹ In 1913 Maitland married Ursula Ella Richards, the twenty-three year old

²²⁹ 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon', *RIBA Journal*, 14 January, 1928, p.145.

²³⁰ Maitland 1887-1942; Ellen M b.1888; Hetty b.1890; Mary H b.1891; Bernard b.1895; Elizabeth W b.1898; George H b.1900, 1901 Census, *National Archives*.

²³¹ J. Fisher, *The Origins of the Practice*, <http://www.westbournemedical.com>, [December, 2007]

daughter of Alexander Richards, a Dorset wool merchant. The marriage was witnessed by his younger brother George and Ursula's sister, Alice. He then joined the Royal Army Medical Corps with whom he spent the First World War before returning to join his father's practice in 1918.²³²

Following Elizabeth Whitworth Scott's success at Stratford-upon-Avon, she designed a house for her brother Maitland and his wife called 'Avon House' which was situated in the kitchen garden of the family home 'Fair Lea'. Sadly, a few years later he died suddenly from a coronary thrombosis in 1942 at the age of fifty-five and his widow sold 'Avon House' to a Dr. Stuart Robertson in 1948 which enabled him to continue Bernard Scott's practice on the site.²³³

Whitworth Scott's sister, Mary Hamilton, married Dr. Thomas George Longstaff, M.B., F.R.G.S. (1875-1964), sixteen years her senior.²³⁴ He had been educated at Eton and Christ Church Oxford and then at St. Thomas' Hospital in London. A man of independent means, he was also a renowned explorer and mountaineer and was the first person to climb to a summit over 7000m in the Indian Himalayas in 1907. He joined the Hampshire Regiment and served in the First World War and the Kings Royal Rifle Corps in World War II. He was known as a genial,

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Westmoreland Gazette*, 14 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

enthusiastic man with a dry sense of humour.²³⁵ Before their first attempt at Mount Everest in 1922, he said to his fellow climbers:

I want to make one thing clear. I am the expedition's official medical officer. . . .but I have never practised in my life. I beg you, in no circumstances, to seek my medical advice since it would almost certainly be wrong. I am however, willing if necessary to sign a death certificate.²³⁶

Longstaff was one of a long line of celebrated personalities in Whitworth Scott's family with medical, religious and architectural backgrounds. Following her success in the Memorial Theatre competition, references were made in the press of her family connections and the influence of her architectural relatives. While undertaking research, I found that although there was an obvious connection to Sir George and Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and that individuals in her family were influential in their own fields of expertise, influence on her career as an architect were not immediately evident. Aside from Whitworth Scott's brief brush with fame, her branch of the family had few prominent characters. (See *Appendix Two*).

4.2 Education

As the daughter of a local middle class family, Whitworth Scott attended the small private girl's boarding school of Redmoor & Teesdale,²³⁷ at Cranford Cliffs in Bournemouth from 1913, leaving in 1917 at the age of

²³⁵ M. Ward, *Everest: A Thousand Years of Exploration*, The Royal Society of Medicine, 2003, Preface, p.iv.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon', *RIBA Journal*, 14 January, 1928, p.145.

eighteen. The school was run by Miss Edith Rudd²³⁸ and positioned in an affluent suburb which overlooked Poole Harbour.

While Scott was at school she had excelled in literature and this interest would later lead her to be attracted to entering the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre competition.²³⁹ Apparently, her love of the arts extended into drawing quite early on, 'It was my greatest pleasure as a child and would always have been my chief hobby if I had never utilised it commercially.'²⁴⁰ However, Whitworth Scott was twenty one before she began to think more seriously about pursuing a career in architecture.²⁴¹ She attributed her choice of career to her family connections and while discussing her success in an interview in 1928, she told the journalist that:

I suppose that my success can be looked upon as the first step on what is more or less a family tradition. I am the great niece of Sir Gilbert Scott and George Bodley, both distinguished church architects, while my second cousin, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, is the designer of Liverpool Cathedral.²⁴²

The press continually linked Scott's name to her great uncles and second cousin as if to give the unknown female architect more credence. She also mentioned the architectural persuasion in the family in other interviews and the *Evening Standard* quoted Whitworth Scott as saying that because of the presence of architects in the family, 'the love of drawing was therefore inherent in me,'²⁴³ and her success

²³⁸ *Kelly's Directory of Dorset*, 1915, p.361.

²³⁹ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

²⁴⁰ *Evening Standard*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

²⁴¹ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ *Evening Standard*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

was 'in no small measure to the architectural inspiration which runs in my family'.²⁴⁴

What Whitworth Scott failed to mention was that she was far too young to have ever met her great uncles and that she had never actually met her second cousin, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.²⁴⁵ Giles' son, Richard Gilbert Scott has no recollection of his father ever mentioning Whitworth Scott and said that his father was 'rather self-absorbed and took little interest in family connections, so was unlikely to have made contact on his own initiative'.²⁴⁶ The reputations of her relatives went before her, of course, and these references to her connections, however remote, would have done her career no harm at all. However, Percy Marks, writing in the *Illustrated Carpenter and Builder* in 1928 was not persuaded, mentioning how the work of the 'journalese' had made her story of breaking through the bonds of prejudice like something out of a novel and thought it 'rank absurdity' to trace her skill back to her relatives.²⁴⁷

4.3 Further education

As an aspiring female architect a university education was not an option for Whitworth Scott because although women's colleges had been established at both Cambridge and Oxford University architecture was not on offer. The University of London had admitted women to degree

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *Birmingham Post*, 6 January, 1928 and *Banbury Guardian*, 12 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 November 1927-5 April 1928.

²⁴⁶ Email from G. Stamp & R. Gilbert Scott to 'Elizabeth Scott', 30 November, 2008.

²⁴⁷ *Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*, 20 January, 1928.

courses in 1848 and architectural classes were made available in the 1890s.²⁴⁸ However, when Whitworth Scott left school she was enrolled at the AA. At a time when many students were staying within the known territory of architectural pupillage as part of their professional training, others opted for a more formal architectural education and the Day School at the AA provided just that. At this time she made a friend of a fellow female student, New Zealander Alison Sleigh (1898-1972),²⁴⁹ whose friendship was to continue while they were at the AA and into their professional careers. Scott not only lodged with Sleigh but they also worked on the theatre drawings together as colleagues.

The work at the AA was meant to be 'preparatory on the one hand and supplementary on the other so that the evening classes still maintained their primary importance in the curriculum.'²⁵⁰ Whitworth Scott would have been expected to produce a portfolio of work, items of which would have been chosen for the exhibition at the end of the year. The portfolio would have demonstrated an understanding of traditional building techniques, architectural, design and drafting skills. It is not

²⁴⁸ L. Walker, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain', *Women's Art Journal*. Vol. 7, No.1, (Spring-Summer, 1986) p.16.

²⁴⁹ Alison Sleigh moved to London to study at the AA in 1921 following advice from either Samuel Hurst Seager or Cecil Wood who engaged her as an articled pupil. She could have studied architecture at Auckland University College but it was unlikely she would have been able to make a career in architecture. Dr. J. Gatley, 'Alison Shepherd, ARIBA; 'Success of New Zealand Lady' revisited', *Fabrications, The Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians*, Australia & New Zealand, 17 January, 2007, pp.20-45.

²⁵⁰ J. Summerson, *The Architectural Association 1847-1947*, Pleiades Books Ltd. London, 1947, p. 34.

known what work Whitworth Scott submitted to the exhibition since no record exists within the Association archives.²⁵¹

It is fair to say that Whitworth Scott did not excel during her undergraduate years at the AA. Her first year was very much an introduction to architectural history including Greek and Roman leading to the Renaissance and Gothic. In terms of construction she would have been expected to learn the basics of foundations, brickwork and roof tiling, together with joinery and plumbing.

By the second year the syllabus was still divided between history and construction and the grades for student's work were being recorded. Scott faced strong competition with eighty students registered in her year and her grades were testament to her being only an average student. She did not show any early strengths and did not seem to be more at home in either history or construction. Rather better grades appeared for her design for an open air theatre where she received a 'mention' although she only achieved very poor results in her Construction and History exams. Her grades for the remainder of the year were generally low or average.²⁵²

²⁵¹ The Architectural Association are unable to retain every piece of work completed by enrolled students throughout its history and therefore, without seeing Whitworth Scott's original project work it is difficult to assess her true level of success or failure. No records were kept for first year projects and examinations, but as a pass was required to reach the second year, it is assumed she attained the necessary grades.

²⁵² *Record Book, 2nd Year, 1920-1921*, The Architectural Association.

Scott's performance was beginning to show a marginal improvement by the third year. It is perhaps worth comparing the results in the ledger of Whitworth Scott and her friend Sleigh to see whether Scott's results were typical for a woman.²⁵³ Scott's results for a design of a block of offices matched Sleigh's in terms of them both receiving a high mark with a 'mention'. Their individual work on projects such as 'Design of a School Hall', 'A Circular Colonnade' and 'A Pier to a Dome' achieved similar marks with a slight increase for both students later in the year with 'Mrs Fussey's House' and 'Stores'. Whitworth Scott's performance in examinations proved to be her undoing by only achieving 20% in her history exam compared to Sleigh's 45%.²⁵⁴

Although both students improved towards the end of the year Sleigh was always ahead. In both 'Construction House' and 'Modelling', Sleigh achieved a 'First in Class' and Whitworth Scott achieved a high mention of '11' and an '8' for the same projects. Significantly, the third term included projects entitled 'Theatre' and 'Proscenium Arch'. In both, Sleigh achieved high scoring mentions, but curiously, Whitworth Scott achieved an average '7' and the lowest in the class '2' consecutively. There was little evidence indicating Whitworth Scott excelling in any particular area and a few of her results now prove interesting in the light of her later achievements, notably, her low marks for theatre related

²⁵³ Sleigh only intended to stay in London for two years but Robert Atkinson, Director of Education at the AA, wrote to her father requesting that she remain for the full five years. She was recognised as a talented student and the Principal, Howard Robertson, employed her in his firm, Easton & Robertson upon her graduation. Dr. J. Gately, 'Alison Shepherd, ARIBA; 'Success of New Zealand Lady' revisited', *Fabrications, The Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians*, Australia & New Zealand, 17 January, 2007, pp.20-45.

²⁵⁴ *Record Book, 3rd Year, 1921-1922*, The Architectural Association.

projects. Her postgraduate work provide better clues for her academic progress and she entered the diploma level of the course in 1922.

By the fourth year, Whitworth Scott was twenty four, and the competition from her peers would have been a lot fiercer, with the number of students in her year suddenly dropping to twenty one, only four of whom were female. She had reasonable success in her submissions for 'Country House' and 'Construction Tracing' producing slightly above average grades for the class. Her submission for 'Finger Post' resulted in her being last in class, but her projects for 'Council Chamber' and 'Roof Truss' imply she had some technical ability, with both receiving high mentions.²⁵⁵ Scott was also graded highly for a garden feature design, a skill she would later be able to put into practice when she worked with Louis de Soissons and Oliver Hill, as well as Bancroft Gardens²⁵⁶ which faced the front elevation of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. Scott and Sleigh received numerous mentions in their studio work in Year Five and their final term project was for an hotel which included the design, construction and landscaping. Scott's final mark was high, a mention of '11' compared to Sleigh's '13'.²⁵⁷

Whitworth Scott had remained at the AA for the required five years, achieving average to high marks, leaving in 1924 with a diploma. Her

²⁵⁵ *Record Book, 4th Year, 1922-1923*, The Architectural Association.

²⁵⁶ *The Bancroft* was an area of land where the local townspeople grazed their animals. The Gardens occupy the site of the former canal wharves and warehouses, N. Fogg, *Stratford-upon-Avon*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1986. It is currently (2008) being redesigned to create a contemporary landscape within an historic setting.

²⁵⁷ *Record Book, 5th Year, 1923-1924*, The Architectural Association.

grades had gradually improved, showing her to be a late developer, and she had reached her goal. When she was interviewed in 1928 about her time at the AA, she said she had spent her time, 'trying my hand at every type of design.'²⁵⁸

4.4 Work in practice

For a short time after her graduation Whitworth Scott worked with Herbert Hardy Wigglesworth (1866-1949) and David Barclay Niven (1864-1942). Wigglesworth had trained with Ernest George and Harold Ainsworth Peto, had made study tours throughout Europe and had worked in New York.²⁵⁹ He also had important Swedish connections working on the Swedish Church in Trinity Square, London and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, for which he was awarded the Knight of the Order of Vasa by King Gustav of Sweden.²⁶⁰

After training with Aston Webb, Niven's offices were known as a 'mecca' for aspiring architectural assistants as he took a particular interest in architectural education. The partnership with Wigglesworth dissolved in 1926 and Niven went to work with Arthur Kenyon (1885-1969).²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ *Evening Standard*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927 – 5 April 1928.

²⁵⁹ Wigglesworth worked for a year in New York with Beaux-arts trained American architect, George B. Post (1837-1913) who designed the New York Stock Exchange.

²⁶⁰ S.A. Gray, *Edwardian Architecture: A Biographical Dictionary*, Wordsworth Editions, 1985.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Scott then became architectural assistant for a year to the French-Canadian architect, Louis EJG de Savoie-Carignan, Viscount d'Ostel Baron Longroy (1890-1962), younger son of Charles, 37th Viscount of Soissons. More commonly known as Louis de Soissons, he was a fervent Classicist who echoed the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome in a wide range of commissions.²⁶² His library contained a vast amount of architectural books and he had a history of designing buildings in the Classical manner.²⁶³

In 1920, de Soissons was appointed architect for the town of Welwyn Garden City²⁶⁴ and his practice was heavily involved in the commission for the next 60 years. Whitworth Scott's first foray into the profession was to work on layout plans for Welwyn and one notable building, now Grade II listed, was the 'Shredded Wheat Factory' completed in 1925. This building shows a break away from de Soissons' love for Classical architecture and is an essay in Art Deco. It would have also been a significant example of the influence on Whitworth Scott's experience of architectural style. Other important works also included work on the Home Office and various Duchy of Cornwall estates in Kennington, London.²⁶⁵ One other notable addition to Welwyn Garden City, which

²⁶² In 1923 Louis de Soissons was made a Fellow of RIBA and a member of both the Town Planning Institute and Société des Architectes Diplômés par le Gouvernement. <http://louisdesoissons.co.uk/>, [December, 2007]

²⁶³ <http://www.johnnouram.com/fbricks.html>, [December, 2007]

²⁶⁴ Founded in 1920 by Sir Ebenezer Howard on redundant farmland in Hertfordshire following his experiment with town planning with Letchworth Garden City. S. Bayley, *The Garden City*, The Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1975, pp.39-43.

²⁶⁵ After WWII, Louis de Soissons worked for the Imperial War Graves Commission combining his knowledge of classical architecture with an appreciation of landscape at Phaleron War Cemetery, Greece and Italian war cemeteries in Rome, Ancona and Rimini. <http://louisdesoissons.co.uk> [December, 2007]

could have later influenced Whitworth Scott, was de Soissons and Arthur Kenyon's cinema and theatre which were built in 1928. Externally they conformed to the requirements of neo-Georgian for the town but internally there were foreign influences taken from Oscar Kaufmann.²⁶⁶



Fig.28 Louis de Soissons, 'The Shredded Wheat Factory' (1925)



Fig.29 Louis de Soissons, 'The Shredded Wheat Factory' (1925)

De Soissons lived in Welwyn Garden City and worked on the planning and design towards his retirement. His work was extensive but two

²⁶⁶ R. Gray, *Cinemas in Britain*, Lund Humphries Publishers, London, 1996, p.83.

churches are of note, The Free Church built in 1929 is described as having been built in the expressionist style with Dutch gables.²⁶⁷ De Soissons also built the Church of St Francis of Assisi later in 1935 which Pevsner thought was dull and has been described as using 'Scandinavian neo-expressionism.'²⁶⁸ It seems he employed a change to the usual Arts & Crafts and Georgian style when it came to designing ecclesiastical buildings in Welwyn.

Whitworth Scott then went to work for Oliver Hill (1887-1968). Hill was an architect who had been trained in the Arts and Crafts and had gained a reputation by designing country houses for the wealthy.²⁶⁹ Scott's time with him also lasted a year and although she assisted him with interior decoration work and garden layouts, she described her time with Hill as being no more than a 'bottle washer'.²⁷⁰

Whitworth Scott's work with Hill was just prior to him converting to modernism in the thirties. He was selected by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway Company to design a new Midland Hotel in Morecombe (1932-34). Upon accepting the commission he informed the Railway Company that, 'you have here a unique opportunity of building the first really modern hotel in the country.'²⁷¹ He jumped at the

²⁶⁷ *Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal*, Conservation, Architecture & Planning, Welwyn Hatfield Council, July, 2007, pp.25-26.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.26.

²⁶⁹ Oliver Hill became a Fellow of the Institute of Landscape Architects and was also a family friend of Edwin Lutyens. R. Gradidge, 'The Architecture of Oliver Hill', *Architectural Design Profiles 24, Britain in the Thirties*, ed. by G. Stamp, pp.30-43.

²⁷⁰ *Daily Chronicle*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927 – 5 April 1928.

²⁷¹ R. Gradidge, 'The Architecture of Oliver Hill', *Architectural Design Profiles 24, Britain in the Thirties*, ed. by G. Stamp, pp.30-43.

chance to put into practice his skill in bringing together architecture, landscape and interior decoration and took a keen interest in the design gaining a new reputation for extravagant interiors. Although Whitworth Scott did not feel her time with Hill was very fruitful,²⁷² these skills of combining architectural design with landscapes and interiors were something she later employed with her theatre design.



Fig.30 Oliver Hill, The Midland Hotel, Morecombe (1932-1934)

Whitworth Scott's third working experience was as a junior architect at the Holly Studio for the small Hampstead firm of Maurice Chesterton (1883-1962).²⁷³ Chesterton²⁷⁴ was cousin to the novelist G.K. Chesterton²⁷⁵ and although he worked extensively in Hampstead he is remembered for only one building, The Node in Codicote, Hertfordshire (1928). This circular thatched dairy building, now offices, is listed and was designed for American business man Carl Holmes setting new

²⁷² *Daily Chronicle*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

²⁷³ *The Star*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

²⁷⁴ Maurice Chesterton retired in the 1950s and moved to Suffolk. *National Life Story Collections*, British Library, 021A-C0467X0025XX-0100A0, [7 July, 2008]

²⁷⁵ Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936), novelist, philosopher, poet, journalist, biographer, famous for Fr. Brown mystery stories and friend of George Bernard Shaw. M. Ward, *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, Sheed & Ward, New York, 1943, p.128.

standards for hygiene and efficient dairy farming in England.²⁷⁶

Although Whitworth Scott's role within the firm was as an assistant, a journalist from the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* implied that she helped with The Node, referring to her time with Chesterton being spent, 'working on farms buildings and large country houses.'²⁷⁷



Fig.31 Maurice Chesterton, The Node Dairy, Codicote, Hertfordshire (1928)

When he left school, Chesterton's father gave him £1000 to assist him in starting a career. He worked in the building trade in Chippenham, Wiltshire, learning the basics of stonemasonry, carpentry and how to deal with labourers on site. After setting up a company that went bankrupt, he moved to Hampstead with his new wife where they bought a condemned house at auction which he spent time doing up, making

²⁷⁶ BB83/00871, <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>.

²⁷⁷ *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 14 January, 1928, T.R., 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

alterations and additions which included a studio.²⁷⁸ While he was working from his home studio the RIBA brought together all the smaller institutions under the one umbrella and Maurice Chesterton became an RIBA Fellow without taking any exams. During a recorded interview with his daughter, Dame Elizabeth Chesterton, she explained her father always said that he had become an architect through 'the back door'.²⁷⁹

Also working at Chesterton's practice was John Chiene Shepherd (1896-1978) who had been both a student at the AA, two years ahead of Scott, as well as a part time tutor. His studies at the AA had been interrupted by the First World War where he was badly injured in France. He was awarded the Military Cross for bravery and then completed his degree in 1922, being elected ARIBA at the end of the same year.²⁸⁰ He was undoubtedly a friend and peer and he was fiancé to Scott's flatmate and fellow student, Alison Sleigh, who also worked on the Memorial Theatre design project. Upon the announcement of the competition win, Shepherd and Sleigh were married in February 1928. It had always been assumed that Sleigh would return to New

²⁷⁸ 'Interview with Dame Elizabeth Chesterton', Interviewed by L. Brodie, *National Life Story Collections*, British Library, Created October 1997, 021A-C0467X0025XX-0100A0, [7 July, 2008].

²⁷⁹ Elizabeth Ursula Chesterton (1915-2002), daughter of Maurice Chesterton, architect and town planner who also trained at the Architectural Association. 'Interview with Dame Elizabeth Chesterton', Interviewed by L. Brodie, *National Life Story Collections*, British Library, Created October 1997, 021A-C0467X0025XX-0200A0, [7 July, 2008].

²⁸⁰ Dr. J. Gatley, 'Alison Shepherd, ARIBA; 'Success of New Zealand Lady' revisited', *Fabrications, The Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians*, Australia & New Zealand, 17 January, 2007, pp.20-45.

Zealand to practice architecture but instead spent the rest of her married life in England.²⁸¹



Fig.32 Geoffrey Jellicoe, The Caveman Restaurant, Cheddar Gorge (1934)

Prior to Chesterton's invitation to become a partner, Shepherd had worked with his friend and former student of the AA, the landscape architect Geoffrey Jellicoe (1900-1996). They had met each other in 1919 and formed a partnership which ran from 1925 to 1931.²⁸² When they both completed their studies Jellicoe remained at the Association School as a lecturer during the twenties and thirties, after becoming a Director and enlightening many pre-war students there. This was the time European influences were sweeping through the Association and evidence of this was later seen in Jellicoe's first architectural commission, The Caveman's Restaurant at Gough's Cave in Cheddar Gorge in 1934. Here he managed to contrast the contemporary horizontal European lines with the vertical lines of the carboniferous limestone in the background.

²⁸¹ Alison and John Shepherd had a son, also John, in 1934. *Ibid.*

²⁸² Geoffrey Alan Jellicoe, founder member of *The Landscape Institute* in 1929 and elected President in 1939 to 1949. He referred to John Shepherd as 'Jock'. J.Peto & D.Loveday, eds, *Modern Britain, 1929-1939*, Design Museum, London, 1999, p.130.

After surveying numerous Italian villas and landscapes they published, *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance* (1925), Jellicoe provided the text and Shepherd the drawings with a selection of images by the Italian photographers, Alinari.²⁸³ The work was greeted by many professionals just as modern design was getting underway. The *Foreword* mentions that John Shepherd's advice to Whitworth Scott was, 'to win for her the international competition for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre . . . mainly through sense of landscape and sympathy to site.'²⁸⁴

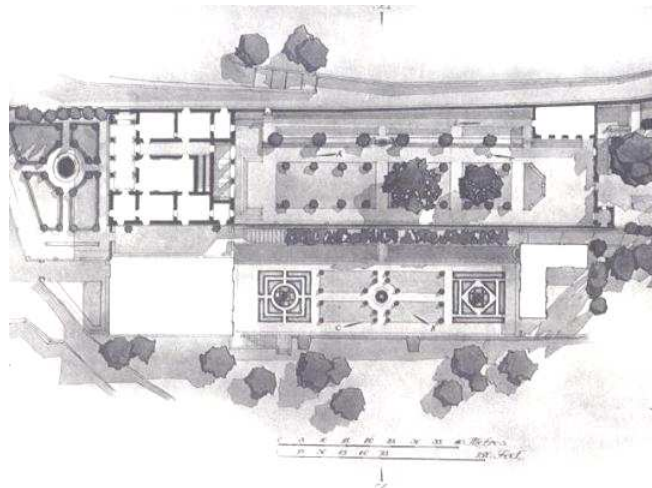


Fig.33 J.C. Shepherd, gardens of Villa Medici, Fiesole (1925),

It is unlikely that Shepherd's advice was the only advice Whitworth Scott received regarding the landscaping as it should also be remembered that she had experience of her own in landscape design and the result was a combination of her being selective of advice she

²⁸³ Fratelli Alinari: Leopoldo (1832-1865), Guiseppe (1836-1890) & Romualdo (1830-1890). Archive collected 1852-1920 specialising in architecture, sculpture, paintings, landscape, topography and genre scenes. C.H. Favrod, M. Maffioli, Z. Ciuffoletti, *Fratelli Alinari – Photographers in Florence*, Fratelli Alinari spa, 2005, pp.9-12.

²⁸⁴ J.C. Shepherd & G. Jellicoe, *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance*, 4th edition, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, December 1986.

received and her own skill. It was on receipt of the award of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre win that she entered into partnership with Chesterton and Shepherd to work on the winning entry. Whitworth Scott's early career as an architectural assistant was generally working for influential architects whose design skills lay in the Arts & Crafts, but also significant leanings towards Scandinavian tendencies. Scott was with Hill prior to his modernist phase and Chesterton was taking a more traditional Arts & Crafts route to his work. Scott's first brush with anything away from traditional would have been with Wigglesworth's Swedish architecture in London and de Soissons break from Arts & Crafts and classicism with his Scandinavian style churches at Welwyn as well as the Shredded Wheat Factory. The strongest reinforcement of modernism would surely have come from her friends and colleagues, architects from the younger generation who were experimenting with the new, Jellicoe and particularly Shepherd, both in terms of the built environment and also the landscape.

Conclusion

I have now shown that Whitworth Scott was undoubtedly related to influential figures in architecture but there is no evidence to support that they ever met. It is likely, therefore, that her connections had no remarkable effect on her career or her future in architecture.

Whitworth Scott's time at the AA concludes that, although she was a capable student, she was by no means outstanding. It is also evident that within three years of leaving the AA she had publicly adopted the mantra of modernism although she had graduated before the full effects of the modernist movement from the Continent had filtered through to the teaching. By the time she won the competition, she had worked briefly with Wigglesworth & Niven, spent a year with the renowned classicist Louis de Soissons, who adapted his style for Welwyn Garden City, as well as Oliver Hill and Maurice Chesterton, neither of whom were practising modernism at that stage. It now appears that Scott's entry for the theatre competition was more a consequence of the professional relationships she had with John Shepherd and Geoffrey Jellicoe and their links to the AA.

CHAPTER FIVE THE SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE COMPETITION

This chapter looks at the major building project which secured Whitworth Scott's place in history and her role in the design. I will look at the background to the international competition for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and explore the influence of the competition assessors on both the requirements of the competition guidelines and also what they were seeking as a solution. I will then discuss how Whitworth Scott translated the expressionist style of the theatre into a form that satisfied the competition assessors which led to her historic win. The chapter then explains the delay in the start of the build with a year for Scott to refine her design, including a trip to Europe and, more significantly, the input of experts in theatre design. I will demonstrate that with little architectural experience Whitworth Scott was confident in her belief of modernism and truly believed that she was a modernist architect and yet the theatre had extensive input from others.

5.1 Background to the Competition

The benefactor Charles Edward Flower (1830-1892), head of Stratford-upon-Avon's brewery, Flower and Sons Ltd.,²⁸⁵ convened a body called the *Council for the Shakespeare Memorial Association* in 1875. He

²⁸⁵ Flower and Sons Ltd., founded in 1831 by Edward Fordham Flower, <http://www.midlandspubs.co.uk/breweries/warwickshire.htm>, [January, 2008]

donated a stretch of land to the town council which ran adjacent to the River Avon from Clopton Bridge to the north east, to the Holy Trinity Church to the south west, as well as providing a substantial amount of the initial funding for a new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. His intention was that the new theatre was to be dedicated to the performance of Shakespeare's plays. The council then raised the remaining needed funds for the building of the theatre, library and picture gallery from public subscriptions.

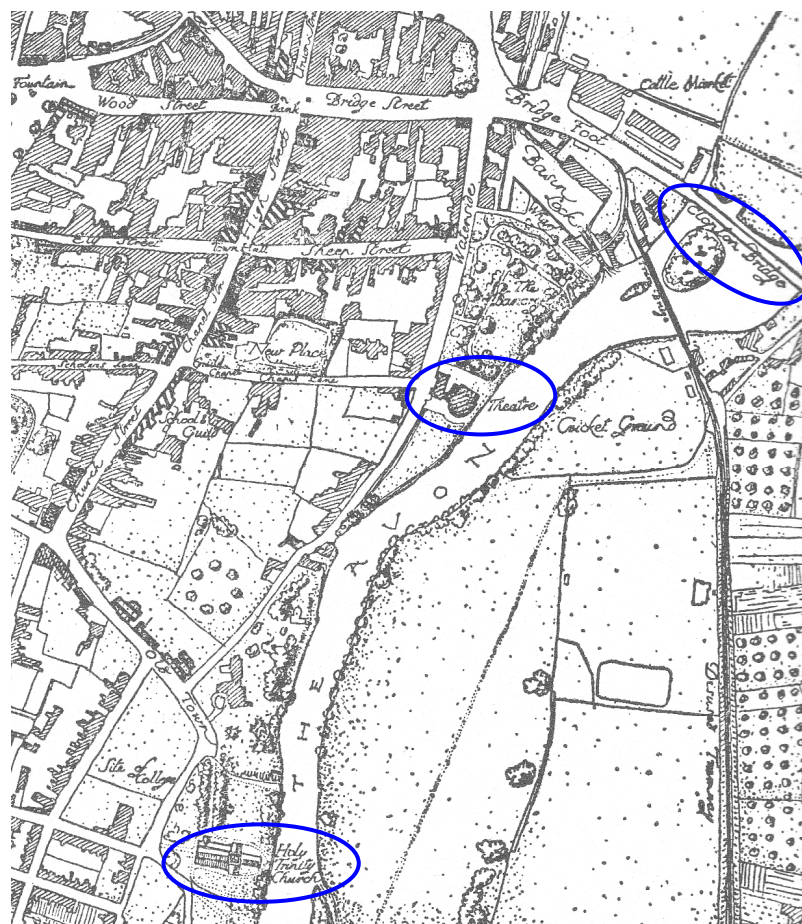


Fig.34 Stratford-upon-Avon, 1923

Stratford-upon-Avon was seen as being too remote and faced ridicule in the press for its attempts to honour Shakespeare, but the council went

ahead and launched an architectural competition in 1876.²⁸⁶ Architects, William Unsworth (1851-1912) and Edward Dodgshun (1854-1927), were commissioned and produced a semi-circular mixture of Gothic revival influences, popular in the nineteenth century, and Elizabethan half-timbering, evocative of Shakespeare's era. The red brick structure and half-timbering with Elizabethan style chimneys on the north elevation reflected the half-timbering and brick in the town. It sat adjacent to the river and the remaining land was landscaped to produce public gardens. The interior of the theatre was horseshoe-shaped with a circle, a gallery and the conventional proscenium stage. In addition to the theatre space, the architects had included a library, a picture gallery and an observation tower.



Fig.35 Dodgshun & Unsworth, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre (1879)

Sally Beauman recounts in *The Royal Shakespeare Company* that:

²⁸⁶ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994, p.20.

The result, built of red brick with dressings of stone, was a weird and unsuccessful mixture of architectural styles, incorporating Tudor gabling, Elizabethan chimneys, Gothic turrets, and minarets. The theatre was flanked by a tall observation tower containing a water tank for use in case of fire.²⁸⁷

When Charles Flower died he was succeeded as Chairman of the theatre governors by his younger brother Edgar who had no real enthusiasm for the theatre. He was eventually succeeded by Charles' nephew, Archibald Dennis Flower (1865-1950) in 1903 who shared his uncle's passion for Shakespeare.



Fig.36 Sir Archibald Dennis Flower

Although the picturesque interior was popular with the visiting public, touring companies complained that the backstage areas were too small and George Bernard Shaw,²⁸⁸ the Irish playwright, was also critical. During a luncheon in 1925 Shaw said, 'the Memorial is an admirable building, adapted for every conceivable purpose except that of a

²⁸⁷ S. Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, Oxford University Press, 1982, p.12.

²⁸⁸ George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) wrote more than 60 plays in his lifetime. He was an ardent socialist and member of the Fabian Society which promoted, amongst other things, equality in the political rights of men and women and a healthy lifestyle. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925. He was friends with fellow writer G.K. Chesterton and the composer Edward Elgar. G.B. Shaw, *Pygmalion*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middx., 1980, Preface, p.7.

theatre'²⁸⁹ and called for a new building. A year later on the 6 March 1926 tragedy struck when smoke was seen coming from the building. The cause was never determined, yet the damage was considerable and very little was salvaged from the blaze. The theatre had been in operation less than fifty years and by the following morning only a blackened shell of the foyer areas and parts of the exterior remained. The library and art gallery were, however, saved and were carefully preserved.²⁹⁰



Fig.37 Fire at Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 6 March 1926



Fig.38 Fire appliances attempting to douse the flames, 6 March 1926

²⁸⁹ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994, p.24.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.23.

Upon receiving news of the destruction of the theatre George Bernard Shaw followed up his insult with a telegram addressed to Archibald Flower, 'Congratulations . . . there are a number of other theatres I should like to see burned down.'²⁹¹ But Archibald Flower, who was the presiding Chairman of the theatre at the time, was not to be discouraged and temporarily converted the Stratford-upon-Avon Picture House, which was also owned by the Flower family, into a theatre. It had always been his wish to have a new theatre and to leave the nostalgia of the Gothic-Tudor style behind. The easier, more cost-effective, route of restoring the current building was not an option for him which meant the fire must have come at an opportune time.

Flower set about making plans for a new theatre to be built and enlisted *The Daily Telegraph* to launch the appeal for £250,000 needed to build the new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.²⁹² This theatre would be, as Flower described it, nothing less than, 'the most modern and best equipped theatre in the world.'²⁹³ To assist them in their plans, the Governors of the Memorial Theatre appointed an advisory committee consisting of Sir Charles Holmes²⁹⁴ (the Director of the National Gallery), E. Guy Dawber,²⁹⁵ Mr Reginald McKenna (Chairman of the

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p.24.

²⁹³ S. Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, Oxford University Press, 1982, p.101.

²⁹⁴ Sir Charles John Holmes (1868-1936), British painter and art critic, formerly of the National Portrait Gallery. *The Architect and Building News*, 22 April, 1932, p.94.

²⁹⁵ Sir Edward Guy Dawber, (1861-1938), A.R.A., F.S.A., P.P.R.I.B.A. Designed public buildings from golf clubs to country houses but had no experience designing theatres. He specialised in the Cotswold vernacular tradition as well as landscape design. He was President of the RIBA 1925-1927 and received a knighthood in 1936. D. Watkin, *English Architecture*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1997, p.190.

Midland Bank), Sir James Barrie (dramatist), and Mr. H. Granville Barker²⁹⁶ (actor-manager and dramatist).²⁹⁷

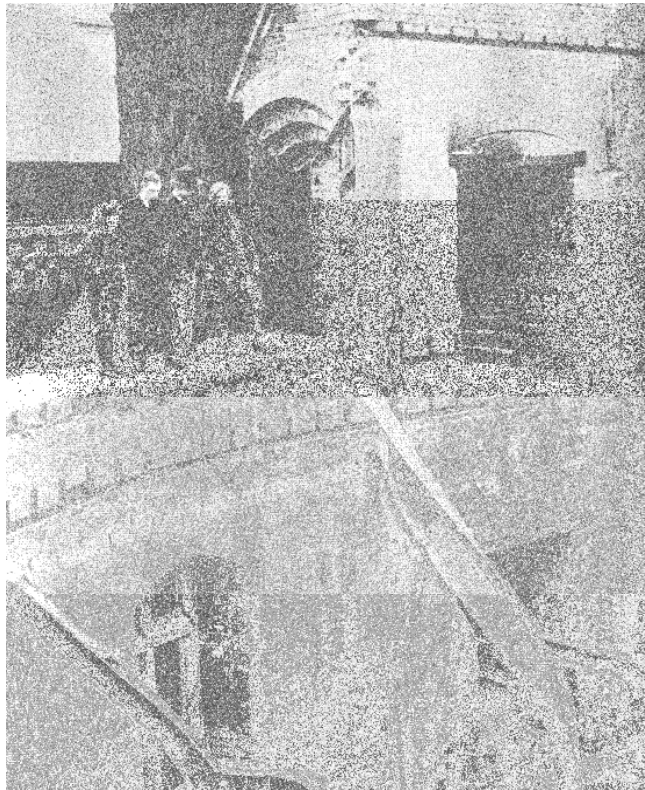


Fig.39 Surveying the damage March 1926
(Bridges-Adams, Festival Director second from left)

The potential for a new theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon faced its first, of many, major criticisms since theatre productions were based in London and the Governors of the *Council for the Shakespeare Memorial Association* were dubbed, by *The Daily Telegraph*, as being 'respectable nobodies'²⁹⁸ who, because of the location of theatre outside the capital would not be able to draw the viewing public. There was also the belief that because the country was facing a depression

²⁹⁶ Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946), English actor, director, producer, critic and playwright. M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon Society, 1994.

²⁹⁷ 'The New Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *The Architect and Building News*, 22 April, 1932, p.94.

²⁹⁸ *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 March 1877.

with economic and political unrest, heavily overshadowed by the General Strike, there was little possibility of raising the large sum of money to build a theatre in Britain. Even with the financial appeal having the backing of former Prime Ministers, Stanley Baldwin,²⁹⁹ Ramsay MacDonald³⁰⁰ and H.H. Asquith,³⁰¹ the author Thomas Hardy and George Bernard Shaw making a personal contribution of 100 guineas,³⁰² Flower still had to look elsewhere for the money.

This came in the form of the *American Shakespeare Foundation* on the other side of the Atlantic. Archibald Flower's announcement of his intention to approach them was greeted with derision. The *Birmingham Mail* commented on the futility of the project and saw the approach of 'begging from the United States (however it is disguised) is not only degrading, but futile.'³⁰³ Regardless of opinion at home, Flower forged ahead with his plans to lobby for financial support and arrived in New York to attend the Foundation's inaugural dinner on 22 April 1927 with guests such as investment banker Otto Kahn (1867-1934) of the bankers Kuhn, Loeb and Co.³⁰⁴; Thomas Lamont³⁰⁵ of Pierpont

²⁹⁹ Stanley Baldwin (1867-1947) 1st Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, Conservative politician and Prime Minister of UK three times. A. Seldon, *10 Downing Street*, Harper Collins, London, 1999, pp.129-131.

³⁰⁰ Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937), Labour politician, Prime Minister of the UK twice. *Ibid.*, pp.132-135.

³⁰¹ Herbert Henry Asquith (1852-1928) 1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith, Liberal politician and one time Prime Minister of UK. A. Seldon, *Ibid.*, pp.122-124.

³⁰² M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994, p.25.

³⁰³ S. Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, Oxford University Press, 1982, p.98.

³⁰⁴ Kuhn, Loeb & Co., one of the most influential investment banks in America. The bank's fortunes faded after World War II and it merged with Lehman Brothers in 1977. <http://www.lehman.com>, [April, 2008]

³⁰⁵ Thomas William Lamont Junior, (1870-1948), American banker, joined J.P. Morgan & Co. as partner in 1910. <http://www.jpmorgan.com>, [April, 2008]

Morgan,³⁰⁶ one of the largest and most powerful financial empires in the country; art collector and philanthropist Solomon Guggenheim (1861-1949); philanthropist John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937); and philanthropist John Pierpont Morgan Junior (1867-1943). By the 17 June, Flower had a contribution of £100,000 from Rockefeller and a further £60,000 made up from other American financiers. These contributions were made public in November 1927 and were met with joy in Stratford-upon-Avon.³⁰⁷

While Flower had spent time in America, he had left his running of the magazine *Shakespeare Review* to local journalist, and another of Maurice Chesterton's literary cousins, A.K. Chesterton (1896-1973).³⁰⁸ Chesterton used the *Review* to express his dislike of the popular press who had shown no interest in the campaign for a new theatre:

The popular press is the greatest enemy of culture today. But for that, and the fact that Englishmen have never had the vision to look upon the drama as something national and splendid, we should long ago have been able to rebuild the Stratford theatre, accepting America's contribution with gratitude untinged with shame.³⁰⁹

At this time, few funds were forthcoming for the continuation of the magazine and Chesterton had no choice but to allow it to fold. He went on to become more involved with raising funds for the new theatre and

³⁰⁶ J.P. Morgan & Co., formerly Pierpont Morgan, American commercial and investment bank. <http://www.jpmorgan.com>, [April, 2008]

³⁰⁷ S. Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, Oxford University Press, 1982, p.99.

³⁰⁸ Arthur Kenneth Chesterton, a self-confessed 'fascist revolutionary' and an extreme anti-semite, 'responsible for some of the vilest and most politically incorrect diatribes against Jews, and racist outbursts against Africans and black immigrants, ever published in the English language' (Foreword, vii). He had inherited the literary talent of his second cousin G.K. Chesterton emerging as Mosley's Director of Publicity and Propaganda in the British Union of Fascists. D. Baker, *Ideology of Obsession: AK Chesterton and British Fascism*, Tauris Academic Studies, London, 1996.

³⁰⁹ A.K.Chesterton, *Shakespeare Review*, July 1928, p.161.

wrote articles in the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* in support of the campaign.

Upon Archibald Flower's return he was ready to set up an advisory panel of Anglo-American assessors and experts from architecture, the theatre, art and finance.³¹⁰ An international competition for a suitable design was finally launched in Britain and America in January 1927 with a prize of £1000.

5.2 The Competition

Guy Dawber, who was in his last year of his RIBA Presidency, drew up the competition brief and led the panel of assessors. Dawber left the exterior and landscaping of the project open to interpretation,³¹¹ but drew up preliminary outlines for the stage requirements, auditorium and backstage after taking advice from theatre director and designer, William Bridges-Adams (1889-1965) who was the current Stage Director.

Flower and Bridges-Adams wanted an iconic, groundbreaking building which would be known throughout the world and act as a potential substitute for the National Theatre in London. It was Flower's opportunity to solve all the difficulties he had faced with the original

³¹⁰ M. Angwood, 'The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *The Architect and Building News*, Vol. CXXX, No. 3305, 1932, pp. 90-113.

³¹¹ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon Society, 1994, p.26.

theatre and he wanted technically up-to-date stage machinery, modern lighting and better sightlines while also creating a sense of intimacy. Bridges-Adams was keen for the stage to be adaptable to any condition the production of a play may require, allowing for both Elizabethan and pictorial stage settings. He told *The Observer* in 1928, 'The need is for absolute flexibility, a box of tricks out of which the child-like mind of the producer may create whatever shape it pleases'.³¹²

In comparison to the open brief for the exterior provided by Guy Dawber, Bridges-Adams in consultation with Harley Granville-Barker, drew up detailed specifications for the stage and the auditorium. The auditorium was required to be a two-tiered horseshoe with boxes; it should contain a removable forestage; it should seat 1000 people; the sight-lines were to allow the audience to see 12 feet of the stage floor; no seat was to be within 15 feet of the proscenium arch or further away than 75 feet; and the stage was to accommodate spacious wings on either side.³¹³

The assessors in the competition were RIBA approved³¹⁴ and included Guy Dawber and American architect, Cass Gilbert (1859-1934) famous for the Woolworth Building in New York (1913). Gilbert's participation was probably due to his involvement with the design committee who approved the modernist designs of the Rockefeller Center. Gilbert was

³¹² I. Mackintosh, *Architecture, Actor and Audience*, Routledge, London, 1993, p.102.

³¹³ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon Society, 1994, p.27.

³¹⁴ J. Earl & M. Sell, eds., *Guide to British Theatres, 1750-1950, A Gazetteer*, The Theatres Trust, A&C Black, London, 2000.

unable to judge the final stage of the competition³¹⁵ and was replaced by Raymond M. Hood (1881-1934). Hood had worked in Illinois as well as New York, where he was working as the Senior Architect in the large design team involved in the building of the Rockefeller Center at the time.³¹⁶ Another assessor was Robert Atkinson,³¹⁷ currently Director of Education at the AA.³¹⁸ Powers adds that former AA students and staff were displaying Scandinavian and Dutch influences in their designs for competitions to which Atkinson was also an assessor such as Norwich City Hall and the RIBA building in Portland Place.³¹⁹



Fig.40 Raymond M. Hood, GE Building, Rockefeller Center (completed 1933)

³¹⁵ 'The New Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *The Architect and Building News*, 22 April, 1932, p.95.

³¹⁶ D. Cruickshank, ed., *Sir Banister Fletcher's: A History of Architecture*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 2001, p.1499.

³¹⁷ Robert Atkinson (1883-1952), originally specialised in the traditional classical style of architecture but then took on the new 'International' style in the 1930s. After being an assistant to John Belcher in 1905 he set up practice and was admitted to the ARIBA in 1910. He was a visiting master to the AA in 1911 and appointed Headmaster, later Principal, in 1913. Admitted to the FRIBA in 1915. P. Spencer-Longhurst, 'Robert Atkinson (1883-1952)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

³¹⁸ 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Result of the Competition', *RIBA Journal*, 14 January, 1928, p.145.

³¹⁹ A. Powers, 'Robert Atkinson and the Architectural Association', ed. P. Spencer-Longhurst, *Robert Atkinson 1883-1952*, Architectural Association, London, 1989, p.20.

The promoters of the competition desired that the building should be 'simple, beautiful, convenient – a monument worthy of its purpose.' It was realised early on that differences in ideals existed between the various ideas of theatre planning and the aim was to allow all the competitors as free a hand as possible. The style of the building was not specified but the request was that it would 'harmonise with the spirit of a theatre and the architecture of the town of Stratford.'³²⁰

5.3 The Competition Shortlist

Whitworth Scott admitted to spending much of her spare time dreaming up ambitious designs which she did not really believe would ever be built.³²¹ She had entered another open competition previously for a fire station in Newcastle, 'I was not, of course, successful, but I determined to try again when another chance for fame came my way.'³²² Chance for success came with the competition for the theatre, about which Whitworth Scott 'felt interested in the announcement but took four months consideration before she began her design.'³²³ Her resolve to succeed overcame her apprehension of failure and she was determined 'to have a shot,'³²⁴ although, as I have shown with her unsuccessful

³²⁰ G.A. Jellicoe, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1933, p.6.

³²¹ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon', *RIBA Journal*, 14 January, 1928, p.145.

³²⁴ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

theatre projects at the AA, she did not feel she was proficient in theatre design.³²⁵

While she considered her options at entering the competition she spent two months going for long walks in the country, 'the hillier the better',³²⁶ endeavouring to create a theatre in her mind. She then spent six weeks working the design out on paper before submitting her entry. Once it had been dispatched she 'really did not bother much more about the matter' and although 'I was certainly very pleased with my effort,' she did not imagine she would reach the second stage.³²⁷

Seventy two architects from Britain and America entered the competition in 1927, including Whitworth Scott, and by November the same year the entrants had been narrowed down to a shortlist which included three American architects and three British. Whitworth Scott learnt that she had been chosen as one of the six finalists and, after her initial excitement, discovered that they had to submit extra details of their preliminary designs. The competition assessors reported to the Governors of the theatre that:

Most of the competitors have fully appreciated the value of a careful study of the site of the proposed buildings, and have endeavoured to harmonise their schemes with the town and locality. The assessors do not consider that any of the designs completely solve this very difficult problem, but further developments will undoubtedly remove any defects in the design chosen.³²⁸

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Result of the Competition', *RIBA Journal*, 14 January, 1928, p.145.

The short-listed British finalists were Percy Tubbs Son & Duncan with Stephen Rowland Pierce, who would later win the competition for Norwich City Hall. According to the assessors, the submission was a brick theatre that would have looked right in a city but did not have the character of a memorial. D.F. Martin-Smith's brick structure, with tall oriel windows, apparently 'caught the style but missed the form.'³²⁹ The *Architects Journal* quoted one of the competition assessors that it was a 'robust piece of work but out of scale and harmony with its surroundings.'³³⁰ Scott, the only woman to take part in the competition,³³¹ managed to assimilate the numerous conditions imposed by the competition requirements and by the nature of the site, 'This logical, this nearly sober expression of function gains on the imagination as one examines the model in detail.'³³²

The entries from the American finalists were no more successful in that they indulged themselves in, 'a deal of sentimental yearning. Pictures of merry feudal England have passed before their eyes . . . a sort of pot-pourri of mixed sweetnesses'.³³³ This summed up the unsuccessful short-list of a Tudor stage by Robert O. Derrick of Detroit;³³⁴ New York City's Albert R. Mohr and Benjamin Moscovitz' design which resembled a conference hall with a second auditorium in the attic; and finally,

³²⁹ 'The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *Architects Journal*, 18 January, 1928.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Result of the Competition', *RIBA Journal*, 14 January, 1928, p.145.

³³² 'The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *Architects Journal*, 18 January, 1928.

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ Robert O Derrick, (born 1890) went on to design the Henry Ford Museum in 1928.

although producing a 'competent piece of theatre planning'³³⁵ the character of Michigan's Albert J. Rousseau's Art Deco cinema-style auditorium was 'patently wide of the requirements'.³³⁶ It appeared that, apart from Elizabeth Scott's entry, the other finalists had given little thought to the public refreshment areas or the practical areas of the back-stage wings but all managed to place some emphasis on the use of the retained part of the original theatre.³³⁷

The judges³³⁸ then made the competitors wait for a further two months before they made their decision. Scott told one interviewer, 'The last couple of months have been rather a terrible suspense and I have spent the time trying to prepare myself for both failure and success.'³³⁹ Finally, the waiting was over and in her own words, 'the impossible happened'.³⁴⁰

5.4 The Winning Entry

Whitworth Scott's simple, functional 'modernist' design was announced as the winning entry in January 1928³⁴¹ and soon afterwards she

³³⁵ 'The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *Architects Journal*, 18 January, 1928.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994, p.28.

³³⁸ E. Guy Dawber, A.R.A., F.S.A., P.P.R.I.B.A., Raymond Hood, A.I.A., A.D.G.F. (New York), Robert Atkinson, FRIBA, Director of Education, Architectural Association. 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Result of the Competition', *RIBA Journal*, 14 January, 1928, p.145.

³³⁹ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ S. Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, Oxford University Press, 1982, p.99.

became partners with Maurice Chesterton and John Shepherd and the firm became known as *Messrs. Scott, Chesterton and Shepherd*.³⁴²

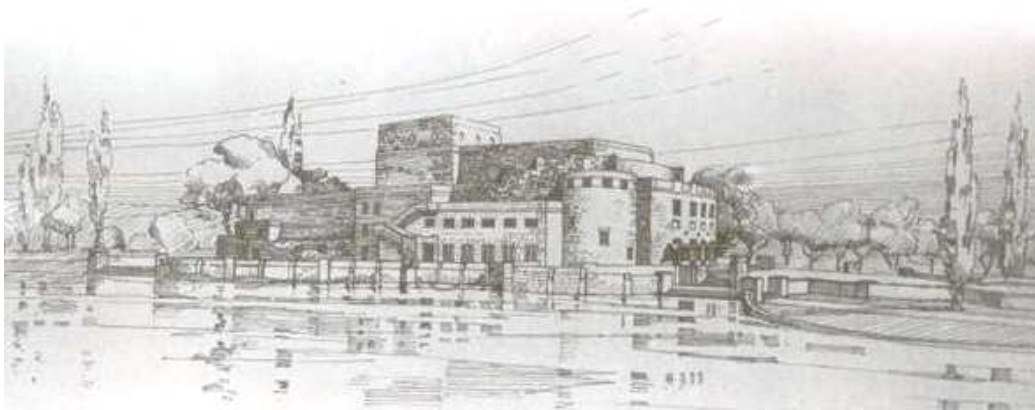


Fig.41 Elizabeth Whitworth Scott, Competition entry drawing (1927)

Whitworth Scott became an overnight celebrity and her competition submission drawings appeared in the newspapers, showing the solidity of the building, the proximity to the river, the stepped back elevations as well as an eye for detail in the landscaping. George Bernard Shaw issued a statement that, 'although the architect is a woman, hers was the only plan which showed any theatre sense.'³⁴³ The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* journalist said 'the rumour reaches me that the award will go to an English woman architect'³⁴⁴ and Professor A.E. Richardson, wrote in the *Builder*, 'This was the first important work erected in this country from the designs of a woman architect.'³⁴⁵

³⁴² G. Jellicoe, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1933, p.9.

³⁴³ *Daily Telegraph*, 6 January 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁴⁴ *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 5 Jan 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁴⁵ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994, p.29.

Whitworth Scott's submission was viewed as a design that broke 'the cast-iron mould of the theatre tradition'³⁴⁶ and without realising what the future held the *Architects Journal* predicted that because her design was less consciously a memorial to Shakespeare it, 'will be more in keeping with the town of Stratford-upon-Avon'.³⁴⁷

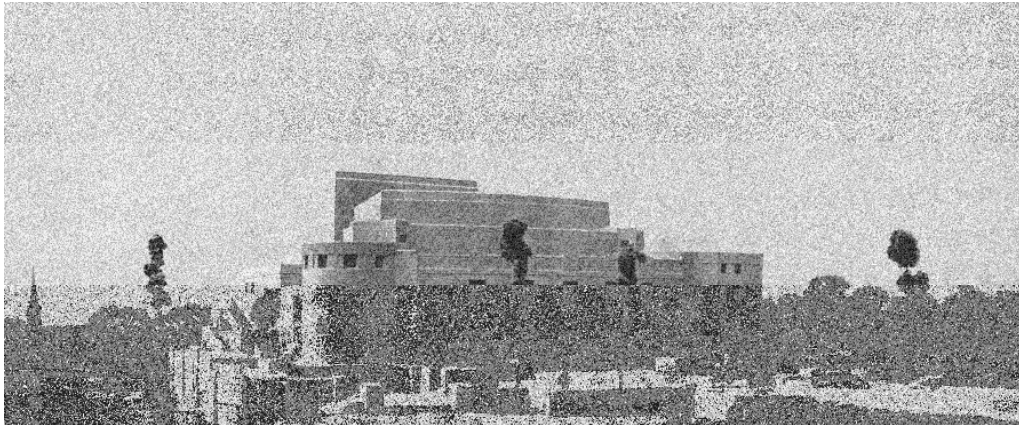


Fig.42 Elizabeth Whitworth Scott, Competition entry model (1927)

The assessors issued their report of Whitworth Scott's design which appeared in many of the broadsheet newspapers at the time stating,

In its general conception, in its acceptance of the site difficulties and their solution, and in its architectural character, shows great ability and power of composition. It has a largeness and simplicity of handling which no other design possesses. Its general silhouette and modelling to fit the lines of the river are picturesque, and the character of the design shows considerations for the traditions of the locality.³⁴⁸

The assessors generally had high praise for her skill and that her submission had fulfilled their desire that it should be 'worthy of Shakespeare's memory'.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ 'The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *Architects Journal*, 18 January, 1928.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Morning Post*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁴⁹ 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Result of the Competition', *RIBA Journal*, 14 January, 1928, p.145.

The judges' choice of Whitworth Scott's design had shaken both A.K. Chesterton and Flower³⁵⁰ but Chesterton saw the potential of launching a local press campaign stressing the importance of such a functionally simple building and the contribution it would make to modern architecture. The building was promoted through a series of articles in the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* which 'helped smooth Flower's task of convincing the highly conservative Stratford theatre establishment that a modern design was a good idea.'³⁵¹ Flower's gratitude to Chesterton's role in the theatre's cause was to continue for years to come.³⁵²

Whitworth Scott acknowledged that much of her original thought for her choice of design for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre had come from architectural precedents, although there were few in Britain at the time. It was not until the thirties that London, particularly, saw a boom in theatres and cinemas with plain façades and extravagant and lavishly decorated Art Deco interiors. The only theatres being built at the time were the Art Deco Cambridge Theatre designed by Wimperis, Simpson and Guthrie³⁵³ and the Phoenix Theatre on the Charing Cross Road in

³⁵⁰ D. Baker, *Ideology of Obsession: AK Chesterton and British Fascism*, Tauris Academic Studies, London, 1996, p.72.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² A.K. Chesterton was invited back to Stratford-upon-Avon by Flower to write a souvenir for the opening ceremony and the speech for the Prince of Wales (see Appendix Three). From 1933-1939, while Chesterton was also working as Director of Publicity and Propaganda in the British Union of Fascists, he was also paid a small retainer for doing publicity work for the theatre. In 1933 Flower commissioned him to write the official history of the theatre, *Brave Enterprise: A History of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon*. Chesterton later considered it to be, 'about the worst book ever published.'

³⁵³ Edmund Walter Wimperis (1865-1946), William Begg Simpson (1880-1959) and Leonard Rome Guthrie (1880-1958).

London, with its neo-classical façade by Whitworth Scott's cousin, Giles Gilbert Scott, with Bertie Crewe³⁵⁴ and Cecil Masey.³⁵⁵



Fig.43 Wimperis, Simpson & Guthrie, Cambridge Theatre, London (1930)



Fig.44 Scott, Crewe & Masey, Phoenix Theatre, London (1930)

Although Whitworth Scott had a limited amount of experience, her self-confidence was based on the belief that she had steadily been training herself for eight years to accomplish some of her ambitions in

³⁵⁴ Bertie Crewe died in 1937, a leading theatre designer. Trained by Frank Matcham, in turn, Crewe trained Cecil Masey. V. Glasstone, *Victorian and Edwardian Theatres; An Architectural and Social Survey*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1975, p.128.

³⁵⁵ Cecil Masey was a cinema and theatre designer. He worked with Sir Edwin Lutyens on the National Theatre. R. Gray, *Cinemas in Britain*, Lund Humphries Publishers, London, 1996, pp.74-77.

architecture.³⁵⁶ She also possessed a creative impulse when she was designing which was dependent on a variety of things:

The creative impulse is difficult to define. It is hard to say where it springs from and how it originates, but certainly great works of the past are one of the greatest sources of inspiration, as ever, art, including architecture. We must all be familiar with the great buildings before we can design new buildings.³⁵⁷

Clearly imitating what she had learnt at the AA, Whitworth Scott based her design work on the theoretical principles that function, space and character should be of primary consideration when designing. She justified her work by referring to Sir Henry Wotton's translation of the Vitruvius triad in his treatise, *Elements of Architecture* (1624), 'The end is to build well. Well building hath three conditions: Commoditie, Firmeries and Delight.'³⁵⁸ She observed that his statement meant that a good building needed planning, construction and design and needed to be appropriate to present day conditions.³⁵⁹

Despite Whitworth Scott's assertions that she was inspired by past architecture, she considered herself a 'modernist in architecture' who would have the purpose of the building at the forefront of their mind.³⁶⁰

By observing the mantra of the modernist style of form following

³⁵⁶ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁵⁷ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

³⁵⁸ Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639) author of *Elements of Architecture* (1624). The un-illustrated treatise (124 pages) was the first English theoretical work on architecture. It was intended for prospective builders of country houses and emphasised practicality. He published the book in haste to enhance his chances of being named Provost of Eton College. Herbert Mitchell, 'An Unrecorded Issue of Philibert Delorme's 'Le premier tome de l'architecture', annotated by Sir Henry Wotton,' *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol.53, No.1 (March, 1994), pp.20-29.

³⁵⁹ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

³⁶⁰ *Manchester Dispatch*, 6 Jan, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

function she sought to express on the outside what was going on inside of her designs³⁶¹ and relied on the function of the building as a means to generate design ideas and form.³⁶² By way of simplifying it she said, 'It is essential to think about the character of every building as the character of a person.'³⁶³

5.4.1 Site

Whitworth Scott had firm ideas about urban planning and felt that the harmony between the elaborate layouts of Royal palaces and extensive gardens provided a perfect pattern for large scale designing in town planning. Drawing on her own work experience of designing garden layouts with de Soissons at Welwyn Garden City she became involved with the promotion of 'Beautiful England'³⁶⁴ headed by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England³⁶⁵ which was an earnest effort to arouse public opinion on beautifying the countryside.³⁶⁶ In a statement to the *Birmingham Gazette* the organisers of the CPRE campaign wrote, 'She is particularly interested in the preservation of rural beauty'³⁶⁷ and she felt strongly that the countryside was being ruined by people becoming too individualistic and the social idea of town planning

³⁶¹ *Manchester Evening News*, 5 Jan, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁶² *The Star*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁶³ *The East Anglian Daily Times*, 6 Jan, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁶⁴ Herbert Morrison, Minister of Transport launched 'Beautiful England' campaign 16th March 1930. *Birmingham Gazette*, 10 February 1930.

³⁶⁵ Sir Patrick Abercrombie started *Campaign for the Protection of Rural England* 1926.

³⁶⁶ *Sheffield Independent*, 17 March 1930, T.R., Vol.23, 25 April 1929-24 April 1930.

³⁶⁷ *Birmingham Gazette*, 10 February, 1930, T.R., Vol.23, 25 April 1929-24 April 1930.

was being recognised too slowly.³⁶⁸ In her opinion the scope of town planning had increased in recent years because of traffic problems in larger cities and that building should be restricted.³⁶⁹

Scott's design approach, in the first instance, was to take into consideration the location and setting. To steer her design she carefully studied the aerial views of the site provided by the competition organisers, which showed the position of the former theatre, the River Avon, Clopton Bridge and the Holy Trinity Church. From these she deduced that 'The site was so unusual it demanded something different from the ordinary theatre design.'³⁷⁰

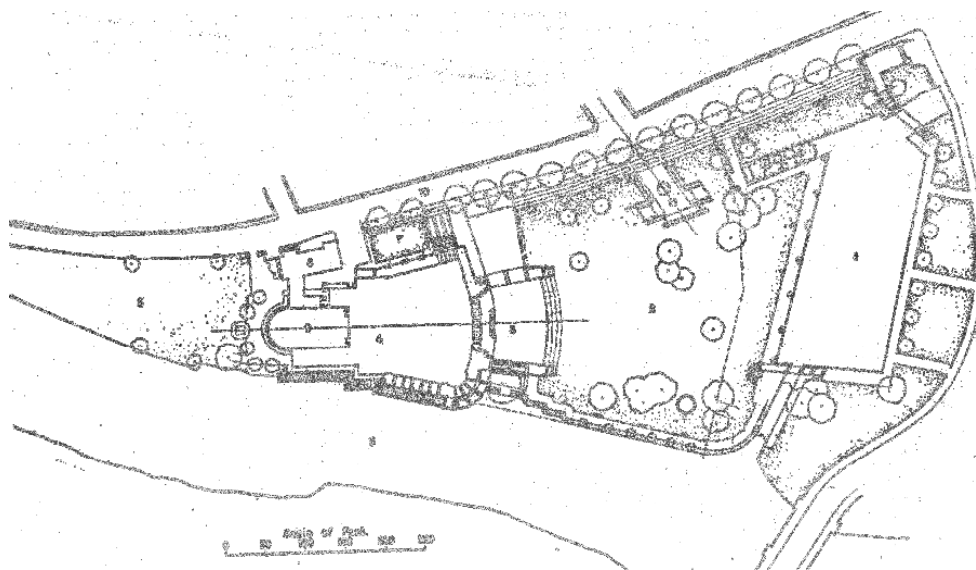


Fig.45 Elizabeth Whitworth Scott, Layout Plan, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre (1927)

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Old Canal Basin | 5. River Avon | 9. Ruins of Old Theatre |
| 2. Bancroft Gardens | 6. Bancroft Gardens | 10. Waterside Road |
| 3. Forecourt | 7. Grass Court | 11. War memorial |
| 4. New Theatre | 8. Old Library | |

³⁶⁸ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ *Manchester Evening News*, 5 Jan, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

Whitworth Scott admitted that she had only visited Stratford-upon-Avon once while preparing the design but felt that this was sufficient to get a feeling for what was needed. The form of the site would be primary in generating the form of the design, 'You in Stratford-upon-Avon are fortunate in having a wonderful site which gives the building a great start.'³⁷¹ Scott utilised the topography to create a design which would have the stature and dignity she felt appropriate for the playing of Shakespeare:

The site is particularly helpful to an architect, and the fact that the river runs at the bottom which is liable to floods has enabled me to give the building a height and dignity which would otherwise have been impossible³⁷²

The site also provided her with the opportunity to create a building that would be observed on all four sides and from a distance:

The Memorial is to stand on a fine open site, seen from a great distance in every direction, especially from across the river, and, for this reason, one can put more zest into the work than into a typical London building which people can see only from the front, and which must appear comparatively characterless.³⁷³

Much of the criticism levelled at Scott's choice of design for the theatre was how such a modern building could be placed in such an historic setting. She was adamant that she had designed the theatre specifically for the site, taking into consideration the setting of trees, meadows and the backdrop of the church, 'I wanted that every line in the landscape should lead directly to the elevation of the building.'³⁷⁴

Later, it became apparent that it was these very lines that so many

³⁷¹ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

³⁷² *Morning Post*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁷³ *The Star*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁷⁴ *Daily Sketch*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

critics felt were too rigid and austere and were seen as being out of harmony with the setting, 'The First Folio is the finest Shakespearean memorial there is. Why build a prison-like building on the Avon?'³⁷⁵

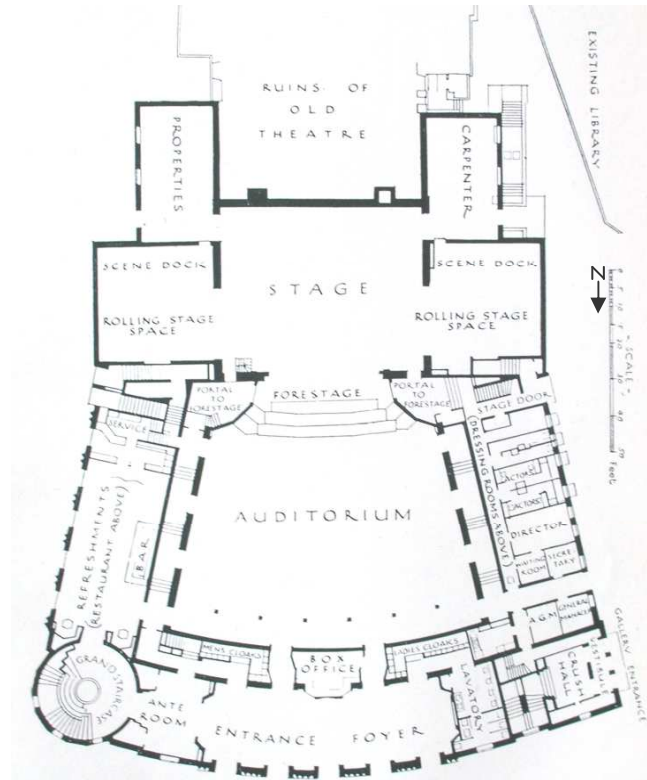


Fig.46 Elizabeth Whitworth Scott, Ground Plan, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre (1927), ruins of old theatre indicated towards the top of the drawing

The full use of the site was limited by the competition guidelines requesting that the shell of the old theatre should also be included in the new designs, but this idea was later abandoned. Instead, the remainder of the old half-timbered library building of the previous Memorial Theatre, which had survived the fire, was to remain as a theatre museum. Although Scott managed to incorporate the two buildings, old with new, it did restrict her plans:

I have endeavoured to disguise or change nothing in the natural working out of the plan which had to comply with that site and the express purpose

³⁷⁵ *Bradford Telegraph*, 6 January 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

for which the building is to stand. With that first condition observed the design may said to have followed its own accord.³⁷⁶

However, Scott was later praised for her sensitivity of incorporating the fragments of the older theatre and, according *The Architect and Building News*, had created a design that was 'inoffensive in shape' and 'composes reasonably well with the new buildings'.³⁷⁷



Fig.47 Theatre as built (1932), showing the integration of the new with the ruins of the old

5.4.2 Exterior

Scott agreed with Sir Henry Wotton's substitution of 'delight' for 'design' in *Elements of Architecture* (1624) and felt that the design of a building grew from its planning and construction.³⁷⁸ She recognised that the conditions of construction had changed radically in recent years and questioned whether old styles were really suited to modern needs.

Through recent advances Scott had learnt that external walls of steel

³⁷⁶ *Daily Sketch*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁷⁷ 'The New Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *The Architect and Building News*, 22 April, 1932, p.102.

³⁷⁸ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

framed buildings were not structural but acted as screens between the weather and the framework:

When new conditions arise, there is certain to be a new style to meet them. Although some modern buildings could quite well be built according to old types of design. I think that you will find that when people get used to the new style it will become uniform.³⁷⁹

Nikolaus Pevsner observed in 1939 that there was a tendency to use brick in modern architecture as it was linked to the growth of the Modern Movement in Britain.³⁸⁰ This was at odds with Scott's original decision to use white concrete for the exterior façade for which she made the tenuous link that it would reflect the Cotswold stone of the Stratford-upon-Avon Town Hall.



Fig.48 Stratford-upon-Avon Town Hall, 2008

The assessors were not satisfied with Scott's decision, or the suggestion of George Bernard Shaw to use Cotswold stone as an

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ 'The Modern Movement in Britain', *British Modern – Architecture and Design in the 1930s*, *Twentieth Century Architecture* 8, Journal of the Twentieth Century Society, London, 2007, p.24.

alternative.³⁸¹ Since the theatre governors had requested that building materials of British manufacture should be used wherever possible the decision was taken to use brick facings.³⁸² The justification was that brick would be warmer, more economical,³⁸³ and 'more in harmony with the general aspect of the town'³⁸⁴ but it seems more logical that the assessors were linking the theatre design to the brick expressionist buildings on the continent. A press release implied that Scott had decided in favour of brick as, 'brick can now be obtained in beautiful tones and this material would be warmer and more harmonious with the general aspect of the town.'³⁸⁵

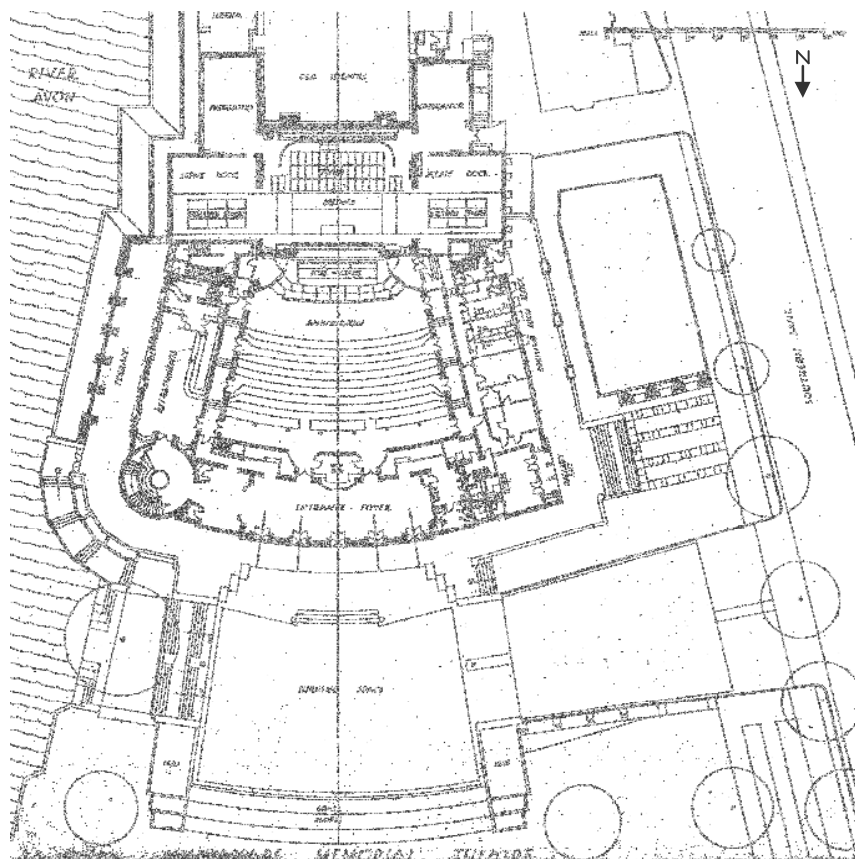


Fig.49 Plan for the theatre (1927)

³⁸¹ *Gloucester Citizen*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁸² *The Architect and Building News*, 22 April, 1932, p.101.

³⁸³ *The Times*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁸⁴ Souvenir of the theatre's opening, 1932.

³⁸⁵ *Coventry Herald*, 28 August, 1928, T.R., Vol.22, 6 April 1928-24 April 1929.

5.4.3 Interior

For Whitworth Scott, the commodity or planning of the theatre had motivated her design, 'It is such an interesting example of planning that I must say something about it.'³⁸⁶ She believed that the spatial requirements of the public attending the theatre had dictated the plan and she had approached the design from the point of view of the people within the building. When Scott was interviewed by the *Birmingham Despatch* in January 1928, she said:

I have aimed at creating an atmosphere of space and ease. In addition to the ordinary structural necessities there will be ample foyers which will help in impressing the public that they have come to a place where they can for a time forget the outside world.³⁸⁷

Reiterating her modernist standpoint she said in an interview with the *Evening Standard*:

I belong to the modernist school of architects. By that I mean I believe the function of the building to be the most important thing to be considered. In terms of theatre . . . this means that acoustics and sight lines must come first. At the same time I have taken full advantage of the exceptionally beautiful site on the banks of the Avon.³⁸⁸

Scott broke down the interior design into component parts, which gave an insight into her process of designing the layout. Firstly, she referred to the stage as an individual unit with various workshops and the orchestra pit surrounding it. The stage was to be equipped with rolling stages, rising bridges and a movable cyclorama and the whole structure

³⁸⁶ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 September 1931.

³⁸⁷ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992, An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994, p.29.

³⁸⁸ *Evening Standard*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

was to be 'in the tradition of the oldest and most lasting theatre setting in history, where players and audience have been embraced in one architectural unit'.³⁸⁹ The auditorium and the front of the theatre were to be used by the audience and it was the natural order that they were given the best aspect and looked out onto the river and the gardens.³⁹⁰

5.4.4 Advised Changes to the Design

In spite of Scott's confidence in her design, the assessors report was also their opportunity to point out what changes they wished Whitworth Scott to make to her submission, which at first glance appeared minimal. They wished to see an improvement to the arrangement of the gallery entrance on the west side, her duplication of foyers and refreshment rooms were 'needlessly extravagant'³⁹¹ and the pay box needed to move further away from the entrance. The auditorium needed widening slightly and they wanted boxes that had been planned at the back of the stalls to be removed. Scott had designed two balcony tiers and these were to be converted into one tier with a step in the middle to provide a temporary Royal Box. The stage area was to see major alterations with the addition of the much desired rolling stages and other machinery that would give the theatre a more technical edge and would necessitate a re-design. With all these changes the assessors suggested it was prudent that 'very deliberate and mature

³⁸⁹ G. Jellicoe, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1933, p.41.

³⁹⁰ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

³⁹¹ *The Times*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

consideration³⁹² should be given to Whitworth Scott's design and a space of twelve months was allowed for her to seek advice, make necessary changes and provide her with the opportunity to visit foreign theatres as a means of fine tuning the final design.

5.5 The Trip to Mainland Europe

In light of the assessors report Archibald Flower agreed, because of the lack of contemporary theatres in Britain, there was a need to look abroad for theatrical precedent and he set about organising a tour of the finest, state of the art theatres in Europe. German theatres were a priority in terms of their technical expertise³⁹³ and Whitworth Scott told the *Morning Post*:

I am now anxious to go abroad and study foreign buildings, especially since I have found that it is impossible to get records of theatre architecture in this country. I do not know where I shall be sent by the Governors before finally revising my plans. It may be Berlin. But anywhere will suit me.³⁹⁴

Whitworth Scott, Flower, Bridges-Adams and Maurice Chesterton left for Germany on Tuesday 17 January 1928³⁹⁵ and met the Managing Director, Herr Artus Wolff, and the Generalintendent, Baron Wilhelm von Holthoff of the stage organisation that controlled all the state and municipal theatres and opera houses, the *Deutscher Bühnen-Verein*.³⁹⁶

³⁹² 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Result of the Competition', *RIBA Journal*, 14 January, 1928, p.145.

³⁹³ C.G. Athanasopoulos, *Contemporary Theatre: Evolution and Design*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1983, p.118.

³⁹⁴ *Morning Post*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁹⁵ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 20 Jan 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid*.

The purpose of the trip was to examine the state of the art technology in theatres by German architect, Max Littmann (1862-1931) and in Berlin and Bremen by Hungarian architect, Oskar Kauffmann.



Fig.50 Max Littmann, Künstlertheater, Munich (1908)

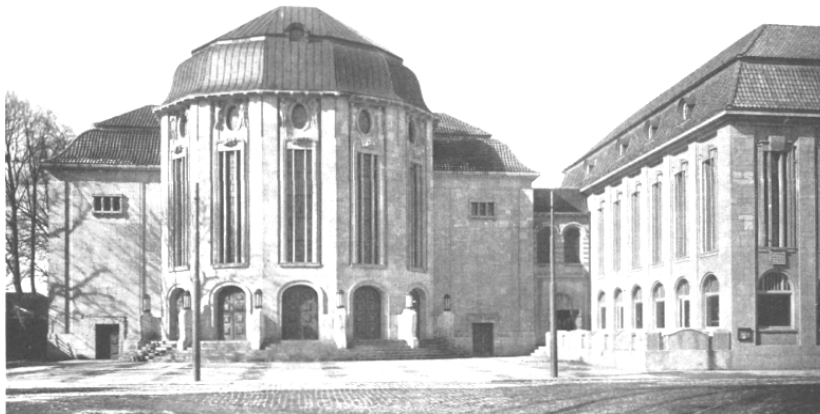


Fig.51 Oskar Kauffmann, Stadttheater, Bremerhaven (1909-1910)

It is apparent that Whitworth Scott was strongly influenced by the bold curved front elevations of Kauffmann's theatres, particularly the Volksbühne, and she reflected this in the front elevation of the theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.



Fig.52 Oskar Kaufmann, Volksbühne, Berlin (1910-16)

Scott expressed a particular interest in the Théâtre des Champs Élysées (1913)³⁹⁷ by the Perret brothers. Auguste Perret (1874-1954) was a neo-classical architect who specialised in reinforced concrete construction.³⁹⁸



Fig.53 Auguste & Gustave Perret, Théâtre des Champs Élysées, Paris (1913)

³⁹⁷ *The Times*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

³⁹⁸ K. Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2007, pp.105-108.

Whitworth Scott later admitted in *The Times* that her research of overseas theatre designs had been beneficial to her and that her design of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre owed something to France, Germany and America. When she described her intentions for the theatre, she referred to the foreign designs as having a ‘friendly atmosphere which I have tried to get’.³⁹⁹

5.6 Advice from Experts at Home

In addition to the European tour of modern theatres, Whitworth Scott was also presented with independent advice from experts in theatrical equipment at home and the theatre Trustees felt that technical advisers should be employed to advise the architectural team.⁴⁰⁰ (see *Appendix Four*). Bridges-Adams approached the British marine artist, Norman Wilkinson (1878-1971) and theatrical designer, Sir Barry Jackson (1879-1961),⁴⁰¹ with whom he had previously worked, to assist Whitworth Scott. She also received advice from the Russian stage director and designer Theodore Komisarjevsky (1882-1954).⁴⁰² Komisarjevsky had also worked with, and advised, Whitworth Scott’s

³⁹⁹ *The Times*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ Sir Barry Jackson, founder of the *Birmingham Repertory Theatre*. After a short time of working as an architect he turned his attention to writing and performing plays. I. Mackintosh, *Architecture, Actor and Audience*, Routledge, London, 1993, p.102.

⁴⁰² Komisarjevsky born in St Petersburg. Trained as an architect but made his name as a theatre director and married Dame Peggy Ashcroft. He used an eclectic mix of styles, mixing Italian Renaissance with French Gothic. He moved to America in 1939. R. Gray, *Cinemas in Britain*, Lund Humphries Publishers, London, 1996, pp.74-77.

cousin, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, on the designs for the Phoenix Theatre in London.⁴⁰³

Acoustically the design received the expert approval of the architectural theorist and acoustician, Hope Bagenal (1888-1979).⁴⁰⁴ He was already viewed as an architect who specialised in the field of acoustics and had provided innovative and ambitious solutions for numerous projects. In line with the selection of other experts in their chosen fields, Bagenal would have been the perfect choice.⁴⁰⁵ Clearly he took an experimental approach to the Stratford Theatre writing in the *Architect and Building News* that 'It will be interesting to see what the effect of the new fore-stage will be upon the general acoustics' and '... when the voice is at conversational strength will give a certain perspective of sound, the artistic effect of which remains to be seen.' His comments gave the impression that perhaps he did not fully approve of some of the decisions taken.⁴⁰⁶

During the year which had been set aside for Whitworth Scott to make necessary changes to the design the *Daily Mirror* had pointed out that, 'the charming young architect is making excellent progress,'⁴⁰⁷ but it

⁴⁰³ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, p.19.

⁴⁰⁴ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 6 March 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

⁴⁰⁵ Philip Hope Bagenal architectural theorist and acoustician. In the army Medical Corps in WW1 and awarded Distinguished Conduct Medal. Specialised in architectural acoustics and wrote many books on the subject. M. Barron, *Auditorium Acoustics & Architectural Design*, E&FN Spon, London, 1993, pp. 131-140, 262.

⁴⁰⁶ 'The New Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *The Architect and Building News*, 22 April, 1932, p.118.

⁴⁰⁷ *Daily Mirror*, 14 September 1928, T.R., Vol.22, 6 April 1928-24 April 1929.

soon became clear that this was not the case and fundamental mistakes were made which would continue to haunt the building for years to come.

Conclusion

A new theatre was an ideal opportunity Archibald Flower and William Bridges-Adams to have a technically up-to-date theatre that would put Stratford-upon-Avon on the theatrical map. They revelled in their success of being in the limelight, but soon realised it was for all the wrong reasons. Balancing the influential funders with the volatile press would have been a diplomatic nightmare as well as having a building in a style that the public were still trying to comprehend sitting in the heart of a quintessentially English town.

The landscape would have a strong influence on Whitworth Scott's design which integrated elements from European design methods to accommodate all the apparent needs of a theatre. It was a perfect example of progress in modern design, a factor the judging panel were keen to embrace. Yet with all this success, the assessors decided that Scott needed another year to refine her design. The year was spent researching other theatres and drafting in theatrical experts to advise the architectural team, all with varying degrees of success.

CHAPTER SIX BUILDING THE SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE

In this chapter I will discuss in some detail the build of the theatre, taking into account the use of the site, the construction of the building, and the attention paid to the elevations and internal detailing. I put forward the responses to the unique design of the theatre from the popular press, the architectural press and the general public. This will demonstrate how the criticisms of the building remained unresolved throughout much of the life of the building. The question here is how did such a patently flawed design ever get built?

6.1 Building the Theatre

In May 1929 work started in earnest at the site with pile driving for the foundations, some 25 feet long, along the riverside terrace.⁴⁰⁸ (See *Appendix Four*). At the beginning of 1930 Whitworth Scott, Chesterton and Shepherd put out a joint statement saying that their hope was that the building would be completed by the anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday (23rd April) in 1931. The *Evesham Journal* immediately showed their lack of confidence doubting the accuracy of the completion date but saying it was more likely that the theatre would open later.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ *Leamington Chronicle*, 31 May 1929, T.R., Vol.23, 25 May 1929-24 April 1930.

⁴⁰⁹ *Evesham Journal*, 11 January, 1930, T.R., Vol.23, 25 May 1929-24 April 1930.

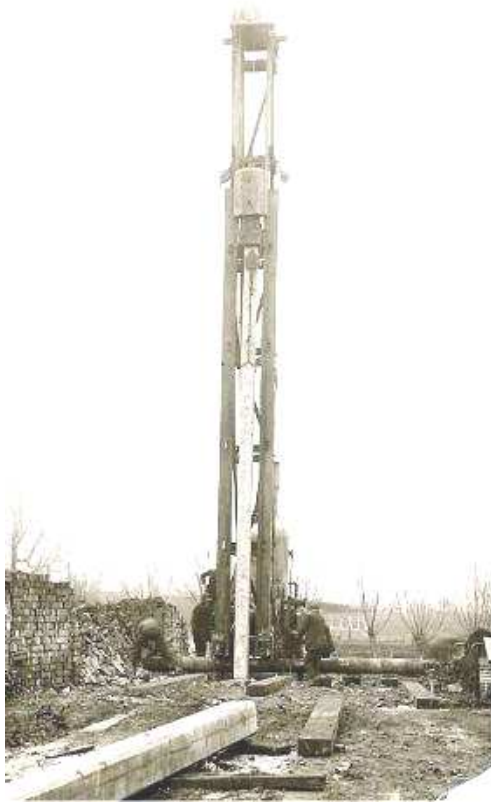


Fig.54 Pile driving, May 1929

6.1.1 Laying the Foundation Stone

The foundation stone was laid with full Masonic honours in July 1929, with the Masons explaining their involvement in Shakespeare's theatre as, 'freemasonry originated from the same national spirit that his immortal verse made part and parcel of the well-being of the people.'⁴¹⁰

Scott made history by being the first woman to attend a stone laying ceremony with full Masonic ritual.⁴¹¹ In attendance were the Deputy Grand Master for Warwickshire, Colonel Wyley⁴¹², other Grand

⁴¹⁰ *The Freemason*, 6 July, 1929, T.R., Vol.23, 25 May 1929-24 April 1930.

⁴¹¹ M.C. Day & J.C. Trewin, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, JM Dent & Sons Ltd, London & Toronto, 1932, pp.198-201.

⁴¹² Colonel William Fitzthomas Wyley, formerly High Sheriff of Warwickshire (1914). *The Freemason*, 6 July, 1929, T.R., Vol.23, 25 May 1929-24 April 1930.

Officers,⁴¹³ six hundred freemasons and a select few of the benefactors to the theatre fund.⁴¹⁴



Fig.55 Laying the Foundation Stone (July, 1929)

After Whitworth Scott presented the silver trowel to the Pro-Grand

Master for England, Lord Ampthill,⁴¹⁵ said:

We Freemasons have a deep respect for those who excel in architecture and in the name of all who are associated here with me; I beg to offer you sincere congratulations on the great distinction you have attained in being chosen as architect for this famous building. We all unite in the hope that many years of success and renown lay before you.⁴¹⁶

A later edition of *The Freemason* described how Scott overcame the issues of designing the theatre in such a historical setting:

⁴¹³ *Birmingham Gazette*, 21 June 1929, T.R., Vol.23, 25 May 1929-24 April 1930.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ The 3rd Baron, Lord Ampthill, Sir Arthur Oliver Villiers Russell (1869-1935) held the senior offices of the Bard of Avon Lodge. 778. *The Freemason*, 6 July, 1929, T.R., Vol.23, 25 May 1929-24 April 1930.

⁴¹⁶ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 5 July, 1929, T.R., Vol.23, 25 May 1929-24 April 1930.

She has had to face the notoriously difficult problem of erecting a large building with a high roof on an island site in a small low-roofed town, but Miss Scott has wisely refused to be frightened by this problem and has boldly accepted it as both inevitable and proper that the theatre should dominate the town.⁴¹⁷

Just how Whitworth Scott gained the backing of the Masons, usually known for their misogyny, is not known.

6.1.2 The Construction

Early in 1930 the *Birmingham Dispatch* announced that construction was likely to face delays because of the discovery of a spring on the site. Flooding from the River Avon had always been a risk that Scott faced but it appears that a spring was not considered. At one point a pump was erected in the foundation pit and was pumping out 15,000 gallons per hour.⁴¹⁸



Fig.56 Stage basement still partially underwater (Spring, 1930)

⁴¹⁷ *The Freemason*, 6 July, 1929, T.R., Vol.23, 25 May 1929-24 April 1930.

⁴¹⁸ *Morning Post*, 10 January, 1930, T.R., Vol.23, 25 May 1929-24 April 1930.

By August of the same year some 150,000 carefully detailed reddish-brown mottled bricks from the Sussex Brick Company had been laid and the press were estimating that the total number would be between one and two million. Hydro-lime instead of cement was used to reduce the risk of later efflorescence.

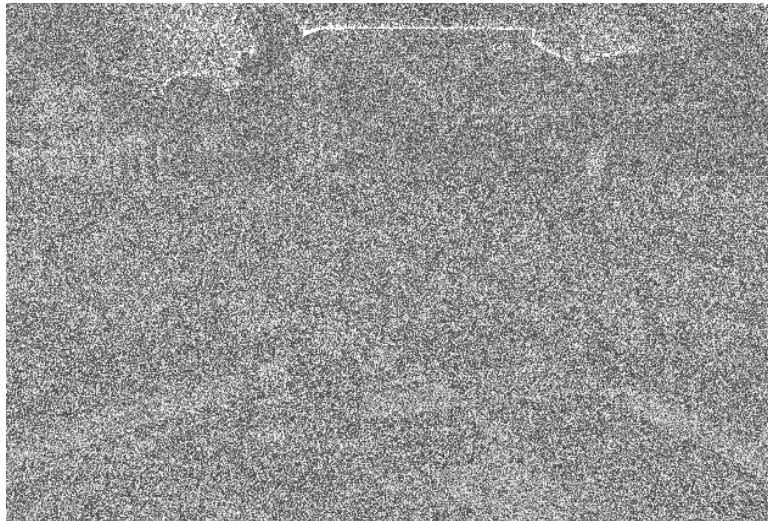


Fig.57 Bricks being laid in the entrance foyer (September, 1930)

The following month the steel girders had been erected and were awaiting the walls, 'two huge steel stanchions that at present dominate the centre of the building comprise part of the framework of the front of the stage, and on them have been placed two massive girders of a joint weight of nine tons.'⁴¹⁹

The construction was well underway by 1931 and in March of that year the *Birmingham Post* reported that the current cost was now given as £183,500.⁴²⁰ By April, the opinions of the press were already creeping

⁴¹⁹ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 12 September, 1930, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

⁴²⁰ *Birmingham Post*, 7 March, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

in and the *Birmingham Mail* published a line, 'Whatever it may lack, the Memorial Theatre is going to be spacious and dignified. The slogan should be 'Watch it grow!''⁴²¹

And watch they did, closely. Progress of the build was reported on stage by stage. A journalist from the *Evesham Journal*, who had previously doubted expected completion date, had been given a tour and was now convinced that the building would be a, 'worthy memorial to Stratford-upon-Avon's greatest townsman, as well as a fine theatre containing many wonders of modern theatre equipment.'⁴²² By May 1931 the outer walls were nearing completion⁴²³ with the construction of the roof due to start in June.

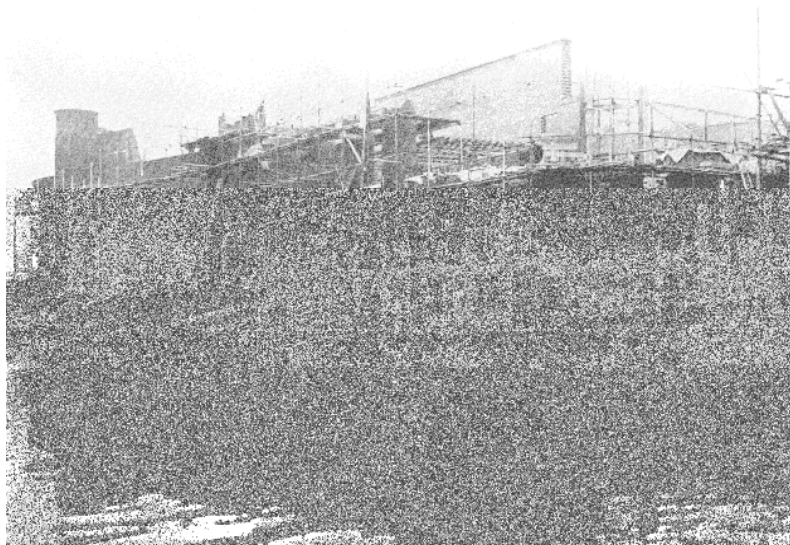


Fig.58 From the River Avon (January, 1931)

The members of the Manchester and Salford Women's Citizens Association made their annual excursion to Stratford-upon-Avon in

⁴²¹ *Birmingham Mail*, 16 April, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

⁴²² *Evesham Journal*, 6 June, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

⁴²³ *Daily Sketch*, 6 May, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

June. The Lady Mayoress of Manchester and the Lady Mayoress of Salford were greeted by the Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon at the Town Hall and then invited to inspect the new building, 'as particular interest and of pride', and also because the architect happened to be female.⁴²⁴

Around the same time another escorted tour around the building was arranged for 250 municipal and county engineers who were attending a conference in Birmingham and were invited to Stratford-upon-Avon to see the new stage equipment by Archibald Flower and the Governors. Rather than taking a lead role in the visit, Whitworth Scott was introduced to them as part of the tour.⁴²⁵

The artist and sculptor Eric Kennington (1888-1960) started work across the brick façade of the front elevation early in 1932, carving five stylised allegorical figures which he said were inspired by the medieval carvings on Chartres Cathedral.⁴²⁶ *The Evening News* described Kennington as, 'tall, dark, fresh complexioned, like a countryman' who after being wounded in World War I was invalided out in 1915 and became the official artist for the War Propaganda Bureau. Although he was better known for his paintings, the newspaper reported that he 'is now concentrating on architectural sculpture.'⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 24 June, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

⁴²⁵ *Evesham Journal*, 24 June, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

⁴²⁶ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992, An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994, p.32.

⁴²⁷ *The Evening News*, 16 April, 1936, T.R., Vol.30, 1 June 1935-6 July 1936.



Fig.59 Eric Kennington carving 'Martial Ardour' (1932)

The carved figures were Kennington's interpretations of the emotions of Shakespeare's plays, 'Treachery', 'Jollity', 'Martial ardour', 'Love' and 'Love triumphing over death'. His presence was probably due to his friendship with John Shepherd, but his work would have been familiar to Whitworth Scott as Kennington and de Soissons had worked on war memorials together previously and Kennington was renowned for his carved brick panels on the Soissons memorial, the 'Soissons Trinity'.⁴²⁸



Fig.60 Kennington's working drawings for Treachery, Martial Ardour, Love and Love Triumphing over Death

⁴²⁸ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 6 Mar 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

The large curved front of the main elevation faced Bancroft Gardens leading round to the grand staircase tower on the north-east corner, which was polygonal on the outside, circular on the inner. The river elevation contained the superimposed stalls bar and restaurant and a large loggia accessible from the river terrace.

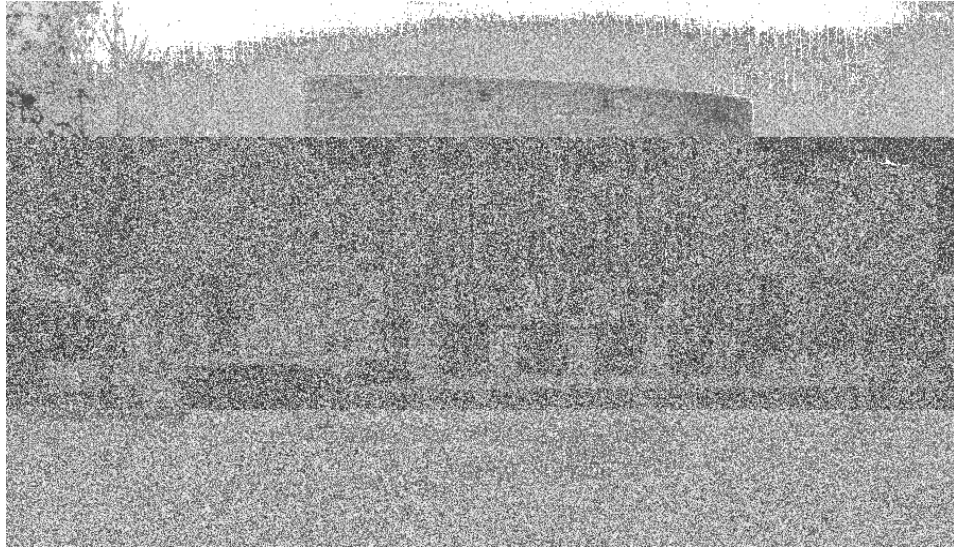


Fig.61 Main entrance elevation from Bancroft Gardens (1932)



Fig.62 The River elevation with the staircase tower (1932)

The west elevation faced onto Waterside and housed the dressing and rehearsal rooms. It was described in *The Architect and Building News* as, 'a trifle bald and disappointing'⁴²⁹ and the north-west corner had the gallery staircase with a small porticoed side-entrance.

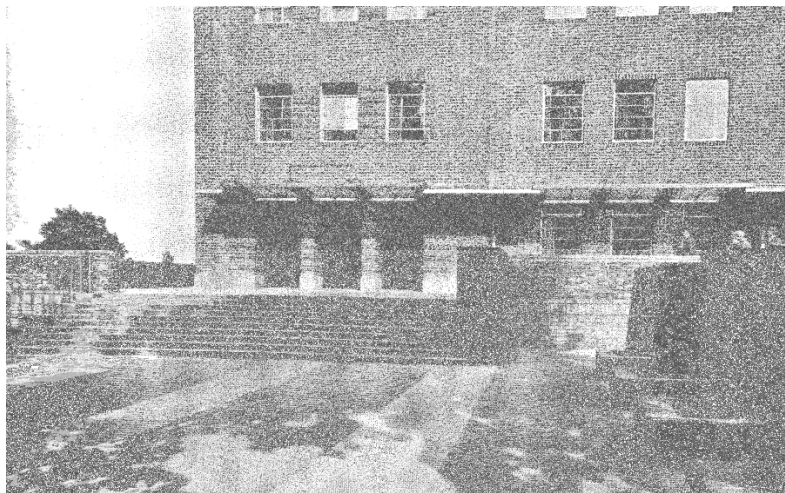


Fig.63 Porticoed side entrance (1932)

6.1.3 Detailing

Whitworth Scott was careful in her approach to the use of materials on the interior of the building. There was a far more international theme than on the exterior. Here woods from countries in the British Empire were used; stained sycamore, East Indian rosewood, Honduras mahogany, English burr-elm, gurjun, ebony, Indian laurel and Andaman padank.⁴³⁰ An editorial in *The Architect and Building News* stated:

One result of great interest is that the materials, such as stones, woods and metals are made to produce their own decorative characteristics rather than relying on the conventions and shapes born of the drawing board.

⁴²⁹ 'The New Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *The Architect and Building News*, 22 April, 1932, p.102-3.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.117.

The design has arisen from the materials, not the material chosen to suit the drawing.⁴³¹

The main entrance foyer was built of plain silver-grey brick, the door surrounds were of stainless steel and Swedish green marble and the floor was paved with Hornton and Ancaster stone with small quantities of Ashburton marble and Derbyshire fossil and the large space was only interrupted by the Pay Box.



Fig.64 The Entrance Foyer, Pay Box to the right (1932)

The main circular staircase at the east end of the foyer was one of the glories of the building. Lined with Stamford grey bricks patterned with Hornton and Ancaster stone slabs, the reinforced concrete stepped balustrade was covered with polished Swedish green marble with the

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, p.106.

windows stepped to follow the stair line. The steps were Hornton stone on reinforced concrete and the handrail was polished silver bronze.⁴³²

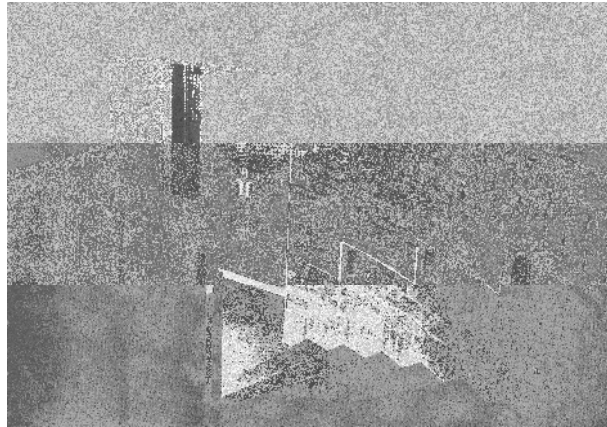


Fig.65 The Main Staircase, door leading to the Dress Circle Refreshment Room (1932)

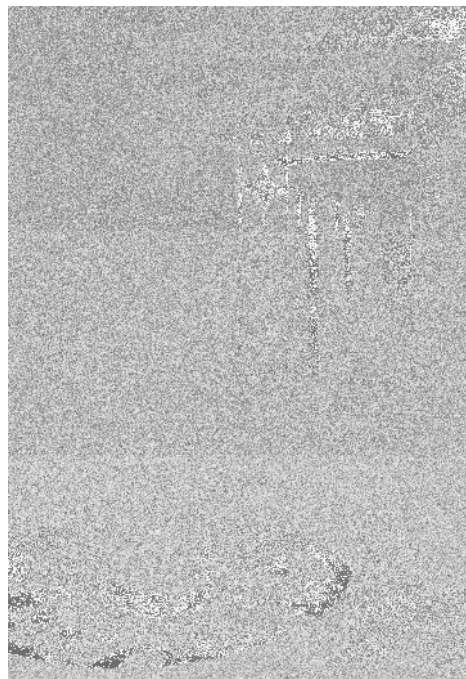


Fig.66 Main Staircase Hall with Fountain and Basin (1932)

The Fountain and Basin in the Main Staircase Hall were designed by the artist Gertrude Hermes (1901-1983). The Fountain was an abstract design carved from a block of *verdi de Prata* marble. The Basin was

⁴³² G.A. Jellicoe, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1933, Fig.18.

lined with red, green, blue, white and yellow vitreous mosaics with dark Hornton stone on the rim which expressed Hermes' ideas of essential rhythms in nature.⁴³³ Everything was 'icily elegant'.

Large ebony doors surrounded by pilasters of stainless steel and more Swedish green marble led into the auditorium,⁴³⁴ the tapering sides of which were painted stark white. Although this might have fitted with Whitworth Scott's sculptural modernism it meant that light was reflected onto the audience, something that the actors found distracting.

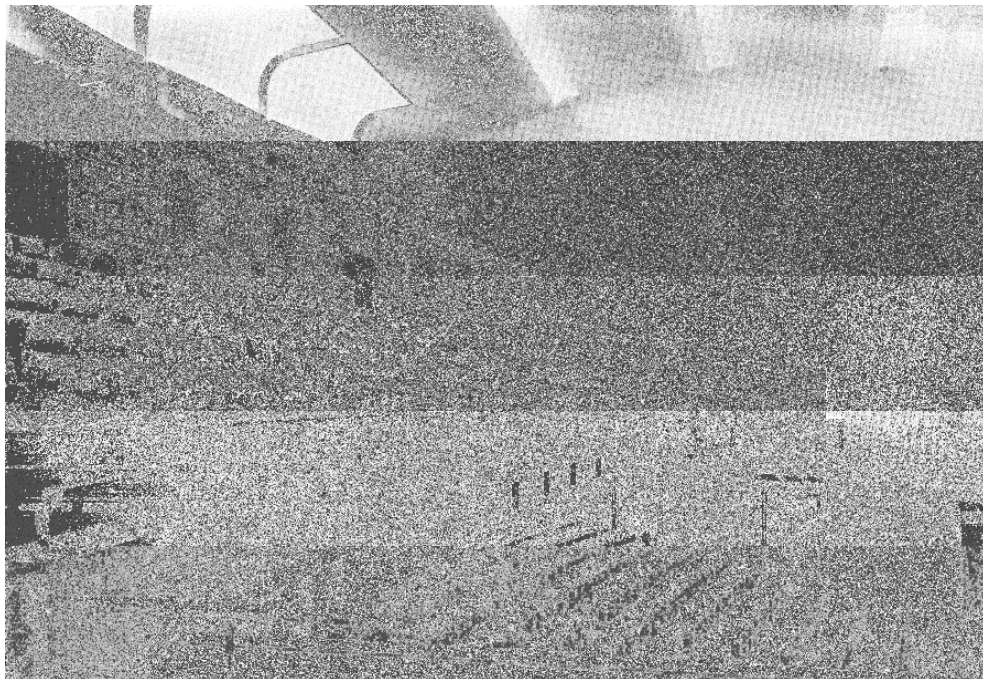


Fig.67 The Auditorium from the Dress Circle level shows the white walls, ceiling light slots and the rear wall of the Dress Circle with pleated fabric for acoustic purposes (1932)

As requested in the competition guidelines, the auditorium managed to seat an audience of 1000, as well as ensuring that 'Comfort, acoustics

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, Fig.18.

⁴³⁴ S. Beaman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: The History of Ten Decades*, Oxford University Press, 1982, p.111.

and optics of each seat is scientifically considered' with the rear seats of the inevitable fan-shaped auditorium 'have as good hearing as those of any part of the house'.⁴³⁵

Vladimir Polunin⁴³⁶ painted the fire screen which depicted William Shakespeare walking through gardens. He was lecturing at the Slade School of Art in London where he had established the Stage Design course and was in charge of the theatrical and arts department. He was also responsible for the curtain and other interiors at Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's Phoenix Theatre in London.⁴³⁷

By the time Whitworth Scott and Bridges-Adams sat down together to work on the design, he was forced to adapt his own ideas to fit in with her plan. His intention had been to create a malleable space for his productions⁴³⁸ but instead he was presented with a stage whose proscenium arch was too small and the fixed nature of the stage meant that the forestage could not be used in conjunction with the rolling stages. The gap between the proscenium and the first row of seats was too wide and the sight lines from the balcony seats was 'disastrous'.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁵ G. Jellicoe, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1933, p.41.

⁴³⁶ Vladimir Polunin (1880-1957) designed posters for London Transport and the Underground Group 1930-1934 and worked with Diaghalev and Ballet Russes. He faced questions of his nationality in the press because although he was born in Moscow he had been a British naturalised citizen for twenty two years. He added that his son was a student at Christ Church College in Oxford. *Birmingham Mail*, 22 February, 1932, T.R., Vol. 25, 20 Sept 1931-22 April 1932.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ I. Mackintosh, *Architecture, Actor and Audience*, Routledge, London, 1993, p.102.

⁴³⁹ S. Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: The History of Ten Decades*, Oxford University Press, 1982, pp.100-111.

The stage was connected to the dressing rooms on the town side of the theatre which had been deemed the least interesting and also the most accessible from the road. The dressing rooms being well equipped with a bath, shower and W.C.



Fig.68 Standard Dressing Room (1932)

However, a consequence of this planning decision revealed itself later when it was discovered that not only was there no Green Room but there were not enough dressing rooms to accommodate a large cast. It also became apparent that while the actors were preparing in their dressing rooms, they not only had to cope with the road noise but they could also overhear the crowds queuing for gallery tickets.⁴⁴⁰

Generally, the backstage areas suffered from the same problems as the original Memorial theatre in that they were too small. Unfortunately, Whitworth Scott's formulaic modernist approach of form following

⁴⁴⁰ *The Architect and Building News*, 22 April, 1932, p.106.

function meant that this side of the building expressed itself as dressing and work rooms, 'rather too stridently' in the opinion of the assessors.⁴⁴¹

Much of the criticism was levelled at Whitworth Scott in terms of inadequate facilities, but some should also have been directed to the summarised version of specifications set out in the competition design brief and questions should have been raised as to the expert professional theatre advice that Scott had received which was either overlooked or forgotten.⁴⁴²



Fig.69 Stalls Refreshment Room (1932)

The Circle Bar on the first floor overlooked the theatre forecourt and river and the remaining public interiors had reduced design detail with only panelling of rare wood and marble as decoration. The intention was that between the acts of the performances:

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² G. Stamp, 'Risky Buildings – The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *The Twentieth Century Society*, <http://riskybuildings.org.uk/docs/24shakespeare/index.html>, [December, 2007].

. . . . the audience fill the foyers, stairs and restaurants, and pass on to the water terraces and gardens; progress is leisurely, rather like that of the boats on the river.⁴⁴³

Whitworth Scott had evidently applied herself to even the most insignificant of fittings to ensure they were suited to their purpose and played their parts in the whole ensemble. According to *The Architect and Building News*, this attention to detail was coupled with the fact that she never lost sight on the bigger picture which was seen as being 'all too rare in modern buildings'.⁴⁴⁴

Twenty years after the building had opened Bridges-Adams commented:

What we eventually got, when the architects, pressure-groups, quacks and empirics had finished with us, was a theatre, of all theatres in England, in which it is the hardest to make the audience laugh or cry.⁴⁴⁵

It was becoming all too apparent that even those closely involved with the theatre did not like it and it seemed that the constant interference, discussion and argument had adversely affected the design.

6.2 Critical Responses to the Theatre

The completed theatre faced the critics head on in a fierce battle of opinions. In *Brave Enterprise*, A.K.Chesterton ensured that the governors were disassociated with any condemnation of the design,

⁴⁴³ G. Jellicoe, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1933, p.41.

⁴⁴⁴ *The Architect and Building News*, 22 April, 1932, p.105.

⁴⁴⁵ Bridges-Adams letter to the *Architects Journal*, 24 February 1951. *Ibid.*, pp.113.

In all matters concerning the external design and internal decorations the Architects have had a perfectly free hand. The Governors have consistently refrained from any interference in this respect. Any other course must have led to confusion, for opinions in regard to taste are bound to differ. This is exemplified by the fact that the design has evoked extremes of praise and the reverse. The Governors felt that they could not do better than rely on the judgment of the royal Institute of British Architects.⁴⁴⁶

This was a man all too familiar with the machinations of propaganda, he was the same man who had smoothed the way for Flower to promote the importance of the theatre in terms of modern architecture and he was also paid a retainer by Flower to produce *Brave Enterprise*. It is perhaps regrettable that Whitworth Scott herself does not seem to have been similarly aware of the power of public relations.

Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)⁴⁴⁷ had agreed to be the theatre's new musical director and prior to the official opening he requested a tour around the building. Upon seeing it he refused to go in saying that he was furious with 'that awful female' and announced her design was, 'so unspeakably ugly and wrong' that he would have nothing further to do with it.⁴⁴⁸ Flower managed to convince him to take the tour in the hope that he would see the building in a different light but this only made matters worse and after a very quick view of the stage, auditorium and foyer, Elgar informed Flower that he would not work in the building under any circumstances, would never step foot in it again and that he would not be able to eat for a month.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁶ A.K. Chesterton, *Brave Enterprise: A History of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon*, J. Miles & Co. Ltd., London, 1934, p.56.

⁴⁴⁷ Sir Edward William Elgar, 1st Baronet, English composer. Friend of GB Shaw.

⁴⁴⁸ S. Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, Oxford University Press, 1982, pp.110-111.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.111.

Flower was concerned that if Elgar's opinions became public, the theatre's reputation would be ruined before it had even been opened.

Bridges-Adams wrote to Flower candidly saying that:

If you take as a personal worry what every elderly buffer says about a public building, you will end by going mental . . . What *you* know is that a theatre in which you are keenly interested carried the official approval of the RIBA, and is none the less 'much discussed', a word which, in the theatre signifies life. What we both know is that we don't personally like a whole lot of it. What I know is that if the Council had given me a free hand with the whole building, as I had with the stage, we should have had a better and cheaper theatre.⁴⁵⁰

Flower's fear of bad press was confirmed when the condemnation of the building continued and the general feeling was that the building was too unsightly for the pastoral setting of the River Avon. Although *The Star* newspaper were pleased Whitworth Scott had competed on equal terms with male architects and won, they questioned the juxtaposition of 'Miss Scott's bold masses and cubist effects' which were totally out of keeping with the tree clad banks of the Warwickshire Avon.⁴⁵¹

The theatre was seen as being highly controversial, ugly and forbidding in comparison to the Tudor cottages that sat adjacent to it, as well as the swan and boat strewn river on the other side. It was described as being 'a brutal modern Colossus'⁴⁵² and nicknamed the 'jam factory' as well as the 'gaol, workhouse and power station'.⁴⁵³ European modernists such as Le Corbusier admired such functional buildings for their monumentality and grandeur, but to build a theatre like a factory, a

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp.110-111.

⁴⁵¹ *The Star*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁴⁵² 'Trial Flight for the Swan of Avon', *The Guardian*, 27 March 1927.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid*.

quietly political gesture, was clearly something that the British public were not yet ready for.

A letter in the *Daily News* felt that the 'banks of the River Avon are to be disfigured by a heavy monstrosity like a Russian fortress, without one graceful line about it. It appears that the fire at Stratford-upon-Avon was more disastrous than we imagined.'⁴⁵⁴ Letters from outraged readers were published, such as the *Liverpool Courier*, 'I am staggered at the style of the proposed theatre . . . looks like a jumble of Windsor Castle, the Tower of London and an Afghan fortress.' The critic felt that it should have been built elsewhere and suggested, 'on the opposite side of the road to the gasworks. It would just balance the gasometer and give an air of symmetry.'⁴⁵⁵

The architectural critic, Trystan Edwards, took an instant dislike to the Memorial Theatre and launched a scathing attack at the design with direct reference to Whitworth Scott's choice of taking the new modernist line. He felt that she had subscribed to a creed that was too narrow for her and it was evident to him that it had not been well interpreted. He felt the modernists claimed that the acoustics and sightlines in the theatre were really the only things that should matter, but Edwards believed that the exterior of a building made a first impression and only

⁴⁵⁴ *Daily News*, letter from Violet M. Brown, Enfield, 9 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁴⁵⁵ *Liverpool Courier*, 7 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

a small proportion of people would actually attend a performance, so what did they care of mechanics of the interior.⁴⁵⁶

The river elevation, of which Whitworth Scott was particularly fond, for Edwards was no better than a 'rather untidy back elevation', where she had given little thought to the uniformity of the shape and size of the windows. He recognised elements of, what he described as, Le Corbusier's essay on 'go-as-you-please fenestration'⁴⁵⁷ but saw this as an excuse for students of architecture to explain away a design that was easier for them. He ended his disparaging attack with:

Yet it is apparent that the modernist creed of expression at all costs will not inspire the creation of architectural beauty, for the personality of a building, just as that of a human being, if it is to be a gracious one, must exemplify not only the art of expression, but the art of concealment, especially when the thing concealed is of little interest to the public. To achieve this, Miss Scott will need to leave her modernist sympathies behind her.⁴⁵⁸

Modernists from *Design and Industries Association* in Birmingham proudly showed the theatre to Walter Gropius during his brief residency in England,⁴⁵⁹ but Pevsner relating after the event that, 'it was embarrassing to see his embarrassment'.⁴⁶⁰ Later Pevsner himself, in keeping with his advocacy of modernism, wrote encouragingly that, 'Taken in its English context of 1930, however, it can surely be appreciated, and it has aged well – better than *Béton brut* will.'⁴⁶¹ He

⁴⁵⁶ *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 4 February, 1928.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁹ *Design and Industries Association* (founded in 1915 – 'Nothing Need be Ugly'), December 2001, <http://www.c20society.org.uk>, [December 2007]

⁴⁶⁰ N. Pevsner and A. Wedgwood, *The Buildings of England – Warwickshire*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1986, p.415.

⁴⁶¹ *Béton brut*, 'raw concrete', was pioneered by Auguste Perret and became synonymous with Brutalist architecture in the 1950s and 1960s. *Ibid.*

went on, 'The building strikes us now as very dated, in its blocky shape and its playing with bricks as the chief decorative element – the one inspired by Holland, the other by North Germany.'⁴⁶²

A letter to the *Daily Telegraph* said that the theatre was a 'monstrosity' and a cross between 'a modern battleship and a pagan temple'⁴⁶³ and a *Northern Echo* reader thought it was like a prison and an insult to Shakespeare. He related a discussion he had with a London bus conductor about the new design who had said, 'Not half as beautiful as my old bus. Shakespeare would have a fit if he could see it.'⁴⁶⁴ In response the *Daily News* simply described it as being, 'More Falstaff than Ariel.'⁴⁶⁵

The *Builder* compared Whitworth Scott's design to the Cathédrale St Cécile in Albi in France, built after a bloody and brutal crusade with a military fortress-like exterior. The journal questioned whether a theatre built on the 'Munich model'⁴⁶⁶ would have been more suitable on the banks of the River Avon and yet applauded Scott for not succumbing to external pressures by creating what could have been a Tudor pastiche, 'there is always a danger of suppressing imaginative qualities and of making buildings conform to cosmopolitan formulae.'⁴⁶⁷ Scott's

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p.415.

⁴⁶³ *Daily Telegraph*, 9 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁴⁶⁴ *Northern Echo*, 9 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁴⁶⁵ *Daily News*, 12 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927 –5 April 1928. Sir John Falstaff is an overweight, comic character in *Henry IV Part I & II* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Ariel appears in *The Tempest*, a bright and radiant harpy.

⁴⁶⁶ *Builder*, 22 April, 1932.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

response was, 'There can be no stock pattern for any building; each has to be designed anew according to its site.'⁴⁶⁸

Bridges-Adams' gave an interview to the *Birmingham Mail* about Whitworth Scott's design to which he said, 'She is giving us dignity and quiet but she is not losing touch with the homeliness and simplicity which were admittedly features of the old Memorial Theatre auditorium.'⁴⁶⁹ Bridges-Adams was a modest man who had already had many of his theatrical decisions undermined. Within two years of the theatre opening he resigned because of his frustration with the Governors, another fact he never made officially public, instead he justified his departure in a statement that the theatre needed new blood.⁴⁷⁰

Whitworth Scott had been invited to speak to the Stratford-upon-Avon Rotary Club in September 1931 and had been warned that some of the members may attack her design with copious mentions of the building.⁴⁷¹ However, she was to be pleasantly surprised that the Rotarians only had good things to say and she expressed her pleasure at being invited to 'a friendly and sympathetic institution, where one could speak of what one was trying to do without being subjected to

⁴⁶⁸ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

⁴⁶⁹ *Birmingham Mail*, 11 July, 1929, T.R., Vol.23, 25 April 1929-24 April 1930.

⁴⁷⁰ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 20 September, 1929, T.R., Vol.23, 25 April 1929-24 April 1930.

⁴⁷¹ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

criticism.⁴⁷² Retired architect, A.C. Bunch, said he had confidence in her design and thought it a shame that as an architect, she had not been spared misinformed criticism. He believed that not until completion would the general opinion be very different from what she was currently facing.⁴⁷³

Some critics openly welcomed Whitworth Scott's new design, Worcestershire architect, Homery Folkes,⁴⁷⁴ congratulated her in the *Birmingham Post* on producing something which gave everyone, 'a rest from the threat of half-timber'.⁴⁷⁵ *The Morning Post* was delighted in what they saw, '... her plans, certainly, have an honest, frank and pleasant appearance, suggesting a true lover of the theatre. It is not only a beautiful theatre, but pleasantly situated.'⁴⁷⁶

The architectural press were in favour of the unadorned look of the theatre and many modernists were thrilled to see such a structure in quaint Stratford-upon-Avon. Admirers included two of the few pre-war British modernist architects, Maxwell Fry⁴⁷⁷ and F.R.S. Yorke⁴⁷⁸ who went on to found the MARS Group the following year. Yorke was a

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁴ John Homery Folkes, FRIBA, architect and collector, member of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society. Partner in *Folkes and Folkes* in Stourbridge, Worcestershire.

⁴⁷⁵ *Birmingham Post*, 24 August, 1931, T.R., Vol.24, 25 April 1930–19 Sept 1931.

⁴⁷⁶ *Morning Post*, 7 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 192 –5 April 1928.

⁴⁷⁷ Edwin Maxwell Fry, CBE, FRIBA, FRTPI (1899-1987) English modernist architect, painter and writer. He co-founded the MARS Group, an architectural think tank, in 1933. J. Peto and D. Loveday, eds., *Modern Britain, 1929-1939*, Design Museum, London, 1999, p.129.

⁴⁷⁸ Francis Reginald Stevens Yorke (1906-1962) English modernist architect and author. Became Secretary and co-founder of the MARS Group in 1933. *Ibid.*, p.130.

regular contributor to the *Architectural Journal* and came from Stratford-upon-Avon originally. He wrote about the theatre in *The Architectural Review* and announced Scott's building a triumph.⁴⁷⁹ The theatre represented a radical statement of 1930s architecture in Britain, perhaps more especially because of its historic setting.⁴⁸⁰ Christian Barman,⁴⁸¹ architect and industrial designer, wrote in *Country Life*, 'Miss Scott gives us clean continuous outline from end to end'.⁴⁸²

Further support came from the Professor of Architecture at Liverpool University, Lionel Budden (1877-1956) who felt that although Scott's theatre expressed modernism, it also possessed national and traditional qualities which would allow it to harmonise with the setting, 'Its picturesque massing recalls medieval compositions and its sobriety and dignity have an authentic English flavour.'⁴⁸³ Cinema architect, Julian Leathart,⁴⁸⁴ referred to the criticism that had been levelled at the theatre in a speech during the Play Convention:

You are all familiar with the whoops of disapproval from the retired colonels and the tirade of nonsense flowing from the bucolic pen of once-popular actors upon the recent occasion of the photos appearing in the pressAll those red-necks and flamboyant should be outraged

⁴⁷⁹ *Architectural Review*, June, 1932, pp.132.

⁴⁸⁰ N. Pevsner and A. Wedgwood, *The Buildings of England – Warwickshire*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1986, p.415.

⁴⁸¹ Christian Barman (1898-1980), architect and industrial designer. He ran his own architectural practice until 1935. He later edited the *Architectural Review* and the *Architects Journal*. J. Peto and D. Loveday, eds., *Modern Britain, 1929-1939*, Design Museum, London, 1999, p.128.

⁴⁸² *Country Life*, 14 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁴⁸³ *The Observer*, 15 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁴⁸⁴ Julian Rudolph Leathart (1891-1967) FRIBA, cinema architect in partnership with W.F. Granger. Played with architectural themes including classical facades, neo-Greek interiors, Moorish, Georgian and Egyptian styles to produce iconic cinemas, including, Dreamland Cinema in Margate and Odeon Cinema in Richmond, Surrey. D. Atwell, *Cathedrals of the Movies*, The Architectural Press, London, 1980, pp.57, 47.

because a theatre has been erected which does not happen to coincide with their own pet ideas of what a theatre should look like.⁴⁸⁵

He believed the critics had not made any attempt to understand the new architectural expressions of a modern theatre and that in order for a theatre design to be successful it did not need decoration that had 'branches of bananas tied with ribbon, interspersed with flambeaux, masks and olive wreaths to express a place of entertainment.'⁴⁸⁶

Art critic, author and The Keeper of the Birmingham Art Gallery, Solomon Kaines-Smith,⁴⁸⁷ had been struck by its 'absolute frankness', 'air of permanence' and 'honest modernity'. He felt that Scott had not bowed down to tradition, yet neither had she produced something that was an 'aggressive assertion of newness'. Instead she had created a magnificent and sincere work of architecture.⁴⁸⁸ H.W. Hobiss, ex-President of the Birmingham Architectural Association thought the theatre was an extremely interesting result and a design which the profession could not have anticipated, 'The design has a similarity to Shakespeare's plays in that it throws convention to the winds.'⁴⁸⁹

The Guardian managed to place its opinions on the theatre firmly on the fence, using terms like, 'violent disharmony', 'monstrous' and 'startling' balanced with, 'a peculiar impression of power' and 'the expression in modern monumental terms of homage to greatness'. The article

⁴⁸⁵ *Birmingham Gazette*, 5 May, 1932, T.R., Vol.26, 23 April 1932–9 August 1932.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ Solomon Charles Kaines-Smith (1885-1958), author and art historian. *National Register of Archives*, GB/NNAF/P164678.

⁴⁸⁸ *Birmingham Gazette*, 7 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

justified the modern style seeping into architecture by explaining to the less aware, 'The theatre has a beauty that comes from the practical adaptation of means to ends', rather than praising the building on its own merits, 'The tower dominates because the space is needed to house the scenery of a dozen Shakespeare productions. Every outward feature of the Babylonian pile is dictated by interior necessity.'⁴⁹⁰

Opinions came from far and wide as seen in a letter to *The Times* from the Scottish Highlands which was firmly in favour of the theatre,

Must we always be bound to the style of the past? Cannot we break away and begin a George the Fifth period that will perhaps inspire future generations to create instead of only imitating? Shakespeare created!⁴⁹¹

The Daily Herald summed up the critics with, 'It has been attacked and praised by self-appointed critics all over the world.'⁴⁹² Criticisms came from all directions and although many architects and designers who were pushing the boundaries of styles had accepted a change to the norm, the new Memorial Theatre was seen as being very un-English.

6.3 The Opening Ceremony

The theatre was ready on time, as promised, for the extravagant official opening on the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, 23 April. The high profile affair drew unprecedented attention to the town with the invitation of Edward, Prince of Wales. London critics descended on Stratford-

⁴⁹⁰ 'Trial Flight for the Swan of Avon', *The Guardian*, 27 March 1927.

⁴⁹¹ Letter from Mrs. J.L. Rose, Fanans, Taynult, *The Times*, 14 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁴⁹² *The Daily Herald*, 16 March 1932, T.R., Vol.25, 20 Sept 1931–22 April 1932.

upon-Avon and the event was broadcast by BBC radio. The ceremony had as much to do with civic and national pride as it had with contemporary Shakespeare, although the town found itself struggling to be as proud of its much criticised theatre as it wanted to be. *The Birmingham Gazette* said that the people of Stratford-upon-Avon were awaiting the arrival of the Prince of Wales to open their theatre, '...with a feeling akin to that with which a sick man looks forward to the visit of his doctor. He hopes to feel better as a result of the doctor's visit'.⁴⁹³ This is what the Stratford-upon-Avonians were hoping for. They now had a new Memorial Theatre, a popular Royal was opening it, but it was a building they were not proud of and they were hoping to get better of 'so unpatriotic a malady'.⁴⁹⁴

The day began with a celebratory peal of bells, a floral procession through the town to New Place Gardens⁴⁹⁵ where a commemorative luncheon was held. After unfurling the national flags, Edward, the Prince of Wales arrived,⁴⁹⁶ greeted by Flower, who was now the Mayor of the Borough as well as the still holding his post of Chairman of the Theatre Governors, Lord Leigh (Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire) and Stanley Baldwin, Lord President of the Council.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹³ *Birmingham Gazette*, 23 March, 1932, T.R., Vol.25, 20 Sept 1931-22 April 1932.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁵ Shakespeare retired and died in *New Place*. It was demolished in 1759 by the then current resident, Rev. Francis Gastrell who was tired of visitors flocking to see the famous house. He deliberately destroyed a mulberry tree in the garden, said to be planted by Shakespeare, then left Stratford-upon-Avon, ordering the demolition of the house. Only the foundations remain. F.E. Halliday, *Shakespeare and His World*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1976.

⁴⁹⁶ *Birmingham Gazette*, 2 April, 1932, T.R., Vol.25, 20 Sept 1931-22 April 1932.

⁴⁹⁷ R. Ellis, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Winchester Publications Ltd., London, 1943, p.66.



Fig.70 The arrival of the Prince of Wales (April, 1932)

A.K. Chesterton had written the Prince of Wales' speech, (see *Appendix Three*) in which he said, 'Nothing can more truly be called a memorial such as this theatre, which perpetuates, side by side with the historical memory of our greatest dramatist, the living spirit of his genius.'⁴⁹⁸



Fig.71 The Prince of Wales' speech (April, 1932)

Whitworth Scott appeared 'a little nervous' but managed to regain her composure as she presented a gold key to the Prince who engaged her

⁴⁹⁸ *Birmingham Gazette*, 5 May, 1932, T.R., Vol.26, 23 April 1932-9 August 1932.

in a short conversation. *Country Life* magazine observed that 'she not only wore a blue outfit but appeared quite small . . . if she felt any pride or excitement not a trace of it showed on her face.'⁴⁹⁹

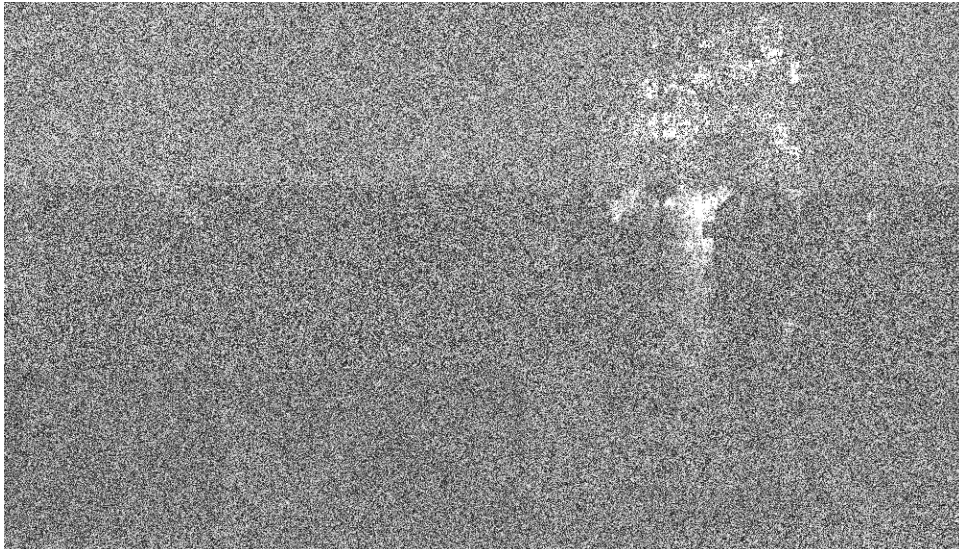


Fig.72 Presentation of the key to the Prince of Wales by Whitworth Scott (1932)

It was necessary that, since Whitworth Scott had not included the required boxes in her design for the auditorium, moveable partitions had to be placed around the Royal Party as they sat in the Dress Circle to screen them off from the rest of the audience.⁵⁰⁰ The Prince's apparent admiration for the occasion was short-lived as he and his entourage left the theatre at the first interval of a performance of *Henry IV Part I* by the Stratford-upon-Avon Festival Company. The evening Gala Performance of *Henry IV, Part II* attended by invited guests, also launched the theatre's first festival with plays including *Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *King Lear*.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁹ *Country Life*, 30 April, 1932, T.R., Vol.26, 23 April 1932-9 August 1932.

⁵⁰⁰ 'Trial Flight for the Swan of Avon', *The Guardian*, 27 March 1927.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

There were high expectations of the day but the theatre critics were harsh voicing their disappointment in the production. Bridges-Adams had not had adequate time to prepare for the opening night and felt pressure in making the productions as impressive as the new theatre. The general feeling was that Stratford-upon-Avon had proven unworthy in its ability to build a suitable monument to Shakespeare and had not managed to present anything particularly interesting inside it.

6.4 Development of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre

Regardless of opinion, there was no getting away from the fact that Stratford-upon-Avon now had a modern, contemporary theatre which would not only attract vast numbers of the paying public but also the finest acting talent. However, the fine acting fraternity would not avail themselves of this modern theatre until after the Second World War. The strengths of the building were few and only became apparent years later when the theatre production culture changed and major directors would exploit the back of the stage and the towering brick wall.

Whitworth Scott was re-called on occasion to do some further work to the theatre's interior layout. At the beginning of 1936 she re-designed the gallery of the auditorium to make room for a further 150 seats. She also added new areas for refreshment for the public without going beyond the existing walls.⁵⁰² By 1938 the theatre required some further

⁵⁰² *Glasgow Bulletin*, 24 March 1936, T.R., Vol.30, 1 June 1935–6 July 1936

minor modifications and Whitworth Scott's newly formed partnership with John Shepherd and John Breakwell were called back again to work on them.⁵⁰³

Major modifications were carried out in the 1950s and 1960s by the actor and theatre director Anthony Quayle, artistic director Peter Hall and director Trevor Nunn which resulted in the proscenium being enlarged, the installation of boxes, the stage was brought forward and the Circle was extended and backstage, a Green Room and new dressing rooms were built on the river side. It was renamed the *Royal Shakespeare Theatre* in 1961 and was listed Grade II on 14 October 1980 and in 1993 the whole site was upgraded to Grade II*.



Fig.73 Construction of new theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, March, 2008

Bennetts Associates took over the rebuild project of the theatre in 2007 and work is due to complete in 2010.⁵⁰⁴ Their plans include the removal of the restaurant extension overlooking the river to reinstate a riverside route and the upper tier of seating in the auditorium has been removed

⁵⁰³ The company was based at 12 York Buildings, Adelphi, London, WC1 and later moved to Pond House, Stoke Row, near Henley on Thames.

⁵⁰⁴ <http://www.rsc.org/transformation/project>, [19 August, 2008].

to create a new restaurant. What Simon Erridge of Bennetts Associates describes as, ‘two bold moves’⁵⁰⁵ are set to give the *Royal Shakespeare Theatre* a new identity. The first is the construction of a viewing tower on the north-west corner, adjacent to the porticoed side entrance, which will be linked to the building via a glazed colonnade.⁵⁰⁶

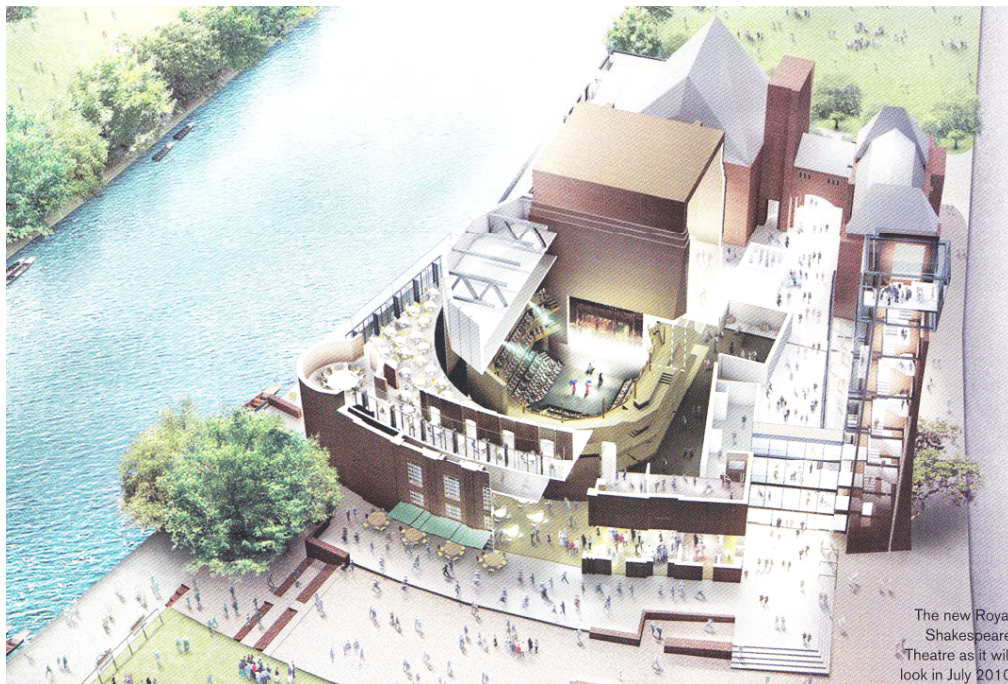


Fig.74 Bennetts Associates, a cut-away representation of how the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre will look in 2010

The second major change to the theatre has been in the auditorium. A thrust stage has been devised and, because of the removal of the upper tier of seating to make way for the new restaurant, the seating has been reduced from 1400 to just over 1000. This has met with criticism already with a letter to the *Architects Journal* asking, ‘Won’t the reduced seating make the facility even more elitist?’⁵⁰⁷ The justification was that

⁵⁰⁵ ‘Technical and Practice – Royal Shakespeare Theatre’, *Architects Journal*, 4 June, 2009, p.35.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.35-40.

⁵⁰⁷ ‘Letter from Martin Moore, New York’, *Architects Journal*, 9 July, 2009, p.18.

the production of Shakespeare required a more intimate space and the maximum distance for the audience from the stage has been reduced from 45m to 15m.⁵⁰⁸ The back-of-house facilities and public spaces have also been remodelled but the Art Deco interiors including the foyers, the fountain and the main staircase will remain. Simon Erridge described the reconstruction as, 'There is nothing precious about the scheme. Rather it is generous and industrial.'⁵⁰⁹



Fig.75 Bennetts Associates, a render of the front elevation of the theatre with the viewing tower and colonnade on the right

Conclusion

While researching the build of the theatre I have discovered that the alterations made to Whitworth Scott's original submission were slight. This resulted in issues that would affect the viability of the building

⁵⁰⁸ 'Technical and Practice – Royal Shakespeare Theatre', *Architects Journal*, 4 June, 2009, p.37.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

never being addressed at the design stage, issues that ultimately affected the reputation of the building for much of its eighty years. The theatre has been subject to alterations and modifications partly because the capability of the building as a working theatre was overlooked as the press were caught up in the visual aspects of the building. I have demonstrated that the press coverage was generally not in favour of the theatre, considering it unsightly and inappropriate in such an idyllic setting, in comparison to the architectural press who were generally in favour.

The disapproval of the theatre design was very much a reflection of the difficulty the public had with Modernism, whether through an ignorance of what was new or a rejection to accept change. It was still only the very early thirties and would therefore imply that it was still too early for people to readily accept Modernism at that time. The building met the requirements of a few and was never fully resolved for many. To be in receipt of such a barrage of criticism cannot have been a pleasant experience for any architect, let alone for one so inexperienced and with so much to prove.

In the final chapter I will illustrate the negative aspects that recognition brought Whitworth Scott and how the effect of the competition and the theatre project affected both her and her career. I will demonstrate how the press responded to her, revealing her inexperience and naivety and how, as the female winner of the competition, she was given the label of being a *female architect*, rather than *architect*. The chapter also explains how she responded to advancement of women in architecture and how the intervention of others reveals more about the role Whitworth Scott took in the design of the theatre. By presenting Whitworth Scott's later commissions I will provide an insight into a portfolio of work that went far beyond current thinking but also illustrates that she never achieved the same distinction in her career again.

7.1 Responses to Whitworth Scott

The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was not alone in receiving extensive press coverage at the time of its conception. The twenties saw an increase in women making the news, it was the decade of women gaining rights, adopting a freer lifestyle and new fashion standards. Whitworth Scott made ideal material for the discussion of a whole range of very topical issues. The press were keen to write about

her because with only three years architectural experience since leaving the AA, she had won the competition being the first woman to design 'probably the first building of national and international importance.'⁵¹⁰

When the announcement of the award was made, almost without exception, the newspaper headlines declared it as a triumph for women. 'Woman Wins'⁵¹¹; 'Girl Architect Beats Men'⁵¹²; 'Woman Architect's Triumph'⁵¹³; 'Englishwoman's Design Accepted'⁵¹⁴; 'London Girl's Winning Design'⁵¹⁵; 'Woman Architect's Success.'⁵¹⁶ None were disparaging, quite the opposite in fact, as an effusive newspaper report from the *Sheffield Telegraph* confirmed:

Woman's taste, all things considered, should not be less in evidence than that of a man, and when native artistry is wedded to a thorough mastery in professional technique, as in the case of Miss Scott, there is less occasion for surprise than may appear at first blush.⁵¹⁷

Whitworth Scott's success was a significant achievement under any circumstances but she faced the continual distinction of being a woman. *The Evening News* felt that because the competition had been won by a woman it was 'doubly remarkable'⁵¹⁸ as architecture had been 'hitherto regarded as a man's profession'.⁵¹⁹ *The Evening Standard* remarked that she had gained a notable triumph, not only for herself but also her

⁵¹⁰ *Daily Mirror*, 6 January 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵¹¹ *Yorkshire Telegraph*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵¹² *Glasgow Evening Times*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵¹³ *Paisley Express*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵¹⁴ *Exeter Express*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵¹⁵ *Evening News*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵¹⁶ *Scarborough Express*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵¹⁷ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵¹⁸ *Evening News*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

sex,⁵²⁰ and *The Lady*, aimed solely at women, wrote, 'Miss Scott's theatre will stand as a landmark in the professional and artistic achievements of women.'⁵²¹

The Manchester Guardian ascribed congratulations to the AA on producing such a fine architect as Whitworth Scott.⁵²² Similarly *The Times* wrote that Whitworth Scott's success was in part due to the system of training at the AA, 'a system which has hardly yet had time to declare itself in results, and her connection with Welwyn Garden City'. The article explained further that not only did the AA provide exceptional training but Scott's time as an architectural assistant would have influenced her success:

The most enlightened experiments of civic planning are being carried out, the latest building being, as it happens, a theatre, it is possible that, in purely formal character, and allowing for the difference in purpose, Miss Scott's design may owe something to the remarkably successful Shredded Wheat Factory by Louis de Soissons.⁵²³

As I have previously discussed, the AA had been training women for some years before Scott's achievement and the *Builder* wrote that some had even 'found their feet' in architecture. The training at the AA therefore justly deserved some of the commendations being heaped on Whitworth Scott as well as other women who had 'found affinities in the same quarter, some had formed partnerships, professional and otherwise as a result of their training.'⁵²⁴ This apparent success

⁵²⁰ *Evening Standard*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927 –5 April 1928.

⁵²¹ *The Lady*, 28 April, 1932, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵²² *Manchester Guardian*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 192 –5 April 1928.

⁵²³ *The Times*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵²⁴ 'Women in Architecture', *Builder*, 27 January, 1928.

enjoyed by so many women was endorsed by the AA in the *Daily Mirror* by saying that the school hoped to produce more female architects. They acknowledged Whitworth Scott's success with an exhibition at the RIBA in 1932 for the work of students since the First World War including the drawings of Whitworth Scott's theatre.⁵²⁵

The pleasure at her design being built to honour Shakespeare was reflected in *The Morning Post* who revealed that Shakespeare took a generous view of professional women⁵²⁶ and that he would have been only too pleased to have a woman architect designing his new Memorial Theatre. The journalist discussed the role of Portia, in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*⁵²⁷ who sought advice from her male cousin who 'gave her some useful tips'. The significance was to reduce Whitworth Scott's apprehension at the enormity of the project before her because, as with Portia, 'the feminine mind leaps over such obstacles'.⁵²⁸ The journalist acknowledged that Scott's success had been achieved, 'in a fair fight' and that 'our feminists are entitled to whoop a little, even though, if their contentions be correct, there is nothing remarkable in such a victory'.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁵ *Builder*, 11 March, 1932.

⁵²⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 6 January 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵²⁷ 'The Merchant of Venice, Act IV, Scene I' – Portia disguises herself as an advocate in the Duke of Venice's court in order to defend Antonio's broken contract with Shylock who has asked for 'a pound of flesh' as compensation. She seeks advice from her cousin Bellario, a lawyer in Padua and saves Antonio's life by explaining that the broken contract was for flesh not blood. Therefore, any blood spilt by Shylock would result in the forfeit of his lands and goods. (W.J. Craig, ed., *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, Oxford University Press, London, 1935, pp.240–244)

⁵²⁸ *Morning Post*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*

The situation of her remarkable victory was something she accepted with 'philosophic calmness'⁵³⁰ and was determined not to let success in architecture 'turn her head.'⁵³¹ The *Daily News* journalist was astonished to realise that her modern approach to architecture had not spilled into her approach to life, 'It seems incredible that she could have produced something so entirely opposite her own personality.'⁵³² He confessed after seeing the design drawings that 'I cannot see a single feminine touch. It is exactly the design one would expect from a man and the last one would expect from a woman,'⁵³³ since it was a design that had, 'strength and massiveness usually considered characteristically masculine'.⁵³⁴ Similarly, the *Bristol Times* commented on how Whitworth Scott had achieved a bold balance of 'harmonious mass severity [stet] and utter avoidance of sugar cake prettiness.'⁵³⁵ During another interview Scott smiled as she pointed to the 'generous provision' she had made for taking tea with picturesque views of the river and asked with humour, 'was that not sufficiently feminine?'⁵³⁶

The *Daily News* referred to the contradiction of such a 'charming dainty figure' being responsible for the 'masculine' characteristics of the theatre while Whitworth Scott whimsically explained that the lines on her design that were not straight and those that had curves in them were an example of the 'feminine touch'. The journalist remarked that

⁵³⁰ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*

⁵³² *Daily News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ *Bristol Times*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

⁵³⁶ *Daily News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

Scott was the opposite of what he expected and instead of 'a modern woman of the extreme type, as 'strong, direct and bold as the design' he found a 'retiring, somewhat shy and very feminine woman' who was horrified at the attention she had drawn and dismayed at the level of unwarranted journalistic attention.⁵³⁷

Out of the limelight Whitworth Scott preferred the domestic life, taking country walks and playing tennis in her spare time and while being interviewed by a journalist from the *Daily News*, she apologised that he would have little to write about, 'I'm afraid you'll find it very difficult to make anything interesting out of me.'⁵³⁸ She was often referred to being a shy young woman who was very self-effacing⁵³⁹ and *The Birmingham Dispatch* described her as being a 'slight attractive woman'⁵⁴⁰ who spoke in a low cultured voice.⁵⁴¹

A modern woman in terms of fashion she chose the popular twenties hairstyle which was cut sharply to taper at the nape and she was described as, 'fair haired and shingled,'⁵⁴² a sign of her emancipation. It is less likely that she ascribed to the other notorious changes that were becoming acceptable, such as smoking in public, extreme dieting and showing ones knees, although it is mentioned she wore a short skirt.⁵⁴³ But when much of the furore of her competition success had died down

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁰ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

⁵⁴¹ *Daily News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

⁵⁴² *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927 – 5 April 1928.

⁵⁴³ *Daily News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927 – 5 April 1928.

Whitworth Scott expressed resentment of the comments made about her clothes and how she wore her hair. She felt this focus on trivialities undermined her determination of being seen as taking a stand on equal terms with men.⁵⁴⁴ The architectural critic, Trystan Edwards (1884-1973) was dismayed at her resentment as it was his opinion was that the press had written about her appearance in 'a spirit of ill-conceived jocularity.'⁵⁴⁵ He explained that as her work was in the public domain there should be no need for journalists to be deferential towards the 'weaker sex' and that since she had put herself forward to design a public building, she was now a 'public personage' and 'should expect the hard knocks of life if her architectural work is not praiseworthy.'⁵⁴⁶

7.1.1 The advancement of the cause of women in architecture

Whitworth Scott's success was an opportunity to encourage women to enter the architectural profession and the *North Shields Daily News* hoped it would promote 'others of her sex to cultivate architecture.'⁵⁴⁷ Domestic architecture was seen as a potential area where women should concentrate on matching their particular skills. The *Builder* saw it differently and pointed out in the article, 'Women in Architecture' that Whitworth Scott's success as an architect was not founded on her expertise in domesticity but her architectural skill:

⁵⁴⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928

⁵⁴⁵ *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 4 February, 1928.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁷ *North Shields Daily News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

Miss Scott's success is not the fruit of a lifetime spent at the kitchen sink or time spent on the interior of cupboards . . . Her success is not because she is a woman or in spite of being a woman. Her sex is a godsend for the Press and the plain fact is that she won the competition as an architect without any prefix.⁵⁴⁸

There was a prevailing sense that she had been accepted into architecture which was a remarkable achievement. Regardless of social forces working against her, she had followed in the architectural footsteps of her relatives and made a career for herself, 'despite the prejudice which exists against the few women architects there are.'⁵⁴⁹

Rather than enmity from Whitworth Scott's colleagues it seemed the consensus was in favour of women taking a more active role in architecture. The correspondent of the *North Eastern Daily Gazette* felt that:

Miss Scott has defied tradition and shown that woman can harmonise with the essentially practical, that sense of beauty, which is inherent in her sex. She has broken down the barriers of prejudice, and proved that it is possible for woman to pluck the ripest of plums of a profession which will be all the better for the introduction of feminine ideas and the feminine touch.⁵⁵⁰

The struggle for recognition was not this easy though and Whitworth Scott used the opportunity of her public voice to highlight the dilemma some women had in professional life. There was a clear intention that she wanted to encourage her female peers to be more self-assured with their futures. In an interview with the *Daily Mirror*, Scott expressed the hope that her success would encourage other female architects and

⁵⁴⁸ 'Women in Architecture', *Builder*, 27 January, 1928.

⁵⁴⁹ *Birmingham Dispatch*, 5 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵⁵⁰ *North Eastern Daily Gazette*, 6 Jan, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

that she had demonstrated the possibility for women to invade the wider sphere of architecture.⁵⁵¹

I hope my success will be an encouragement to other women architects. There is no prejudice against women in architecture who have as many chances as men to distinguish themselves.⁵⁵²

Highlighting the cause of the advancement of women in architecture was an opportunity taken by many of the newspapers. The *Manchester Guardian* saw Whitworth Scott's success giving greater impetus to women in the profession, particularly to those who were coming through the ranks of architectural education. The newspaper made reference to the AA by indicating that there had been 'many other clever students graduating from the School' but no other female architect had such conspicuous success, 'There are thirty women associates of the RIBA but as yet no FRIBAs. There are about 70 women now at the Institute schools.'⁵⁵³

As a member of the *Junior Council of the London and National Society for Women's Service*, Whitworth Scott acted on their philosophy to promote women in male dominated professions. Scott employed, where possible, female architectural staff to assist her on the design of the theatre,⁵⁵⁴ including her friend and classmate at the AA, Alison Sleight whom she employed as a draughtsman. Indeed, it has been suggested that Scott won the competition in 'consultation' with

⁵⁵¹ *Daily Mirror*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵⁵² *Daily Chronicle*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵⁵³ *Manchester Guardian*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵⁵⁴ L. Walker, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain', *Women's Art Journal*. Vol. 7, No.1, (Spring-Summer,1986) p.17.

Sleigh.⁵⁵⁵ Another draughtsman was Dorothy E.G. Woollard R.E.

(1886-1986) whose pencil sketches appeared in Chesterton's *Brave Enterprise*.⁵⁵⁶

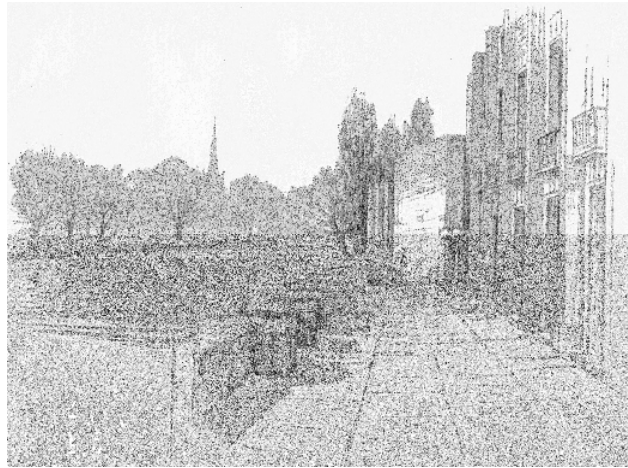


Fig.76 Dorothy Woollard, Drawing of the River Terrace

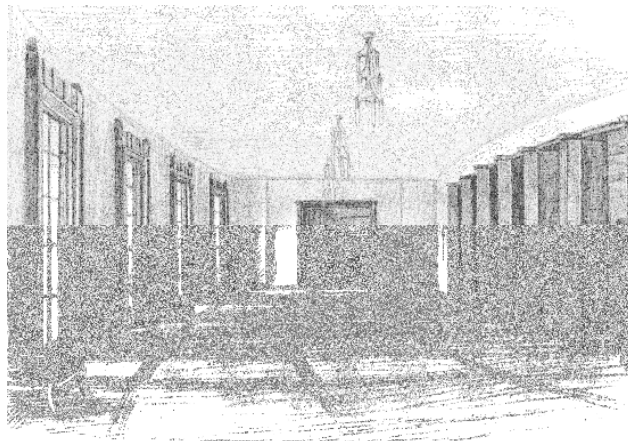


Fig.77 Dorothy Woollard, Drawing of First Floor Foyer

Scott attended a female-only dinner in March 1928 hosted by the *Junior Council* whose guest list included reputed and senior members; Pippa Strachey (1872-1968),⁵⁵⁷ who had followed her mother's participation in

⁵⁵⁵ J. Earl & M. Sell, eds., *Guide to British Theatres, 1750-1950, A Gazetteer*, The Theatres Trust, A&C Black, London, 2000, p.208

⁵⁵⁶ A.K. Chesterton, *Brave Enterprise: A History of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon*, J. Miles & Co. Ltd., London, 1934.

⁵⁵⁷ Philippa Strachey, Member of the Executive Committee for the Central Society for Women's Suffrage then Secretary of the London Society and Secretary to The

the Junior Council, Lady Jane Strachey; Pippa Strachey's sister, Joan Pernel Strachey (1876-1951),⁵⁵⁸ had been made Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge in 1923, a link that would later be beneficial to architectural commissions taken on by Whitworth Scott; Lady Emmott (1886-1954)⁵⁵⁹ the President of the National Council of Women's Parliamentary Legislation Committee; English novelist and playwright, Clemence Dane (1888-1965); Ethel Watts,⁵⁶⁰ member of the Executive Committee of the Society and Chairperson of the Junior Council; and the wife of architect Maurice Chesterton. Despite Whitworth Scott's allegiance to the *Junior Council* she criticised the idea that any particular attention should be placed on the fact that as a female she had won the competition since it was open to men and women alike.⁵⁶¹ During the meal it was reported that Scott '... made a shy un-egotistical speech in the character of a young architect who was quite incidentally a woman.'⁵⁶²

Women's Employment Federation. (Papers of P.Strachey, dates 1925-1961, GB01067/PHS, The Women's Library).

⁵⁵⁸ Joan Pernel Strachey attended Newnham College, Cambridge, then later Principal until she retired in 1941. She volunteered at the London Society while her sister was President. *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁹ Lady Mary Gertrude Emmott, wife of 1st Baron Emmott. Established 'The National Council of Women in Oldham' in 1897. Vice-Chair of the 'Women's National Liberation Foundation', Member of the Executive Committee, President of the London Branch, Chairperson of the National Council of Women's Parliamentary Legislation Committee, Vice President in 1927 and President until 1938. Member of 'Executive Council for the London Society for Women's Service' for over 50 years until it became the Fawcett Society. Elected President until 1954, just before her death. (Papers of Lady M.G. Emmott, dates 1916-1925, 7/MGE, The Women's Library).

⁵⁶⁰ Ethel Watts, first woman to qualify as a chartered accountant in 1913 from Royal Holloway. (Key Facts, Royal Holloway, University of London, March 2007, p.11).

⁵⁶¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

⁵⁶² *Evening Standard*, 12 March, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

A report of the event in the *Evening Standard* described Whitworth Scott as ‘a gifted architect, not a gifted woman architect,’⁵⁶³ a distinction that had always been important to her as she wanted to be viewed as an architect and to be judged on her work and nothing else.⁵⁶⁴ She believed that her abilities were a result of hard work and practice rather than a product of natural skill or inherited aptitude. ‘From my short experience I have found that a woman stands as much chance as any man.’⁵⁶⁵

7.1.2 Building her practice

The issue of a female working in a male environment did not dominate Whitworth Scott’s early career. It became apparent through research that she had many misgivings of her ability to undertake such an arduous task of building a theatre so early in her career. Scott attributed her success in the competition to the improved methods of architectural training but in many ways she also revealed much more about her own situation:

Formerly young architects began their careers in offices where they spent a good deal of precious time being useful about the place, but they are now able to enter schools and acquire theory from highly trained teachers. Fresh from schools and newly interested in the most modern theories of their art, young architects stand almost as good a chance of winning a big competition as experienced architects. Inevitably they are weak on the practical side of their work and I should not care to undertake the actual building of the theatre without the skilled guidance of Mr. Chesterton. I do not see that the schools can do more than they are doing at present to give their students practical knowledge of building. The function is to inculcate theory; the practical knowledge can only be gained by experience.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁴ *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 4 February, 1928.

⁵⁶⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

⁵⁶⁶ *The Times*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 Nov 1927–5 April 1928.

Instead of referring to women in particular, Scott talked generally of 'young architects'. This was more of an admission of her own deficiencies and how other young architectural students could find themselves in a situation more challenging than their experience could have prepared them for. Her training from professionals undoubtedly prepared her for the willingness to seek new design solutions to a problem, but in terms of the practicalities of the build she would need to rely on the expertise of her senior partner, Maurice Chesterton.

Whitworth Scott's loyalty was evident when a journalist from the *Manchester Guardian* noticed a Shakespeare calendar in Scott's office and suggested it would be interesting to see whether Shakespeare had an appropriate word for his architect. Scott's birthday, 20 September, contained a quotation from *Romeo and Juliet*, 'A pack of blessings lie upon your back'.⁵⁶⁷ Whitworth Scott was struck at how appropriate this was for her current position of carrying out the contract the theatre but added that she considered herself fortunate that she had the help of Maurice Chesterton to see her through such an immense task.⁵⁶⁸ Throughout the project, other members of the partnership were awarded Scott's loyalty and she acknowledged that she could not work in isolation. The *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* mentioned that her work

⁵⁶⁷ 'Romeo and Juliet, Act III, Scene III'. Friar Lawrence, Romeo's confidant, reprimand him for trying to kill himself following his banishment from Verona after killing Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, in anger. He accuses him of self-centredness and urges him to think what he should be grateful for. (W.J. Craig, ed., *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, Oxford University Press, London, 1935, p. 904)

⁵⁶⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol. 21, 10 Nov 1927-5 April 1928.

was reliant on the organisation of her partnership with Chesterton and Shepherd which dealt with the many sides of the work.⁵⁶⁹

Scott's youthful enthusiasm in dealing with her situation was not unique in architectural competitions, as witnessed in 1907 when twenty-nine year old Ralph Knott (1878-1929) won the competition for London City Council County Hall. Giles Gilbert Scott, was only twenty-two when he won the design of the Liverpool Cathedral ahead of C.R. Mackintosh and C.H. Reilly. Experts were drafted in to help the inexperienced Giles and changes were made to his design, but his family connections undoubtedly went some way to secure his success. As I have already revealed, George Frederick Bodley had been articled to Giles' grandfather and was in partnership with his father, and he not only judged Giles' design to be the winner but was also one of the specialists employed to assist with the build. Giles endured George Bodley and others with the cathedral design but he took a much firmer line with the advice he was given, whereas, Whitworth Scott appeared to adopt the more stereotypical female role of compliance which was typical of the time.

Whitworth Scott's naivety was evident when she was drawn in to responding to questions on her architectural theories. Her lack of experience in a design philosophy that she was still developing was seized upon and given exaggerated emphasis. The *Builder* said, 'All

⁵⁶⁹ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, 11 September, 1931, T.R., Vol. 24, 25 April 1930-19 Sept 1931.

that can be said here on this point is that ripe wisdom and a wide range of experience in expressing the various needs of this life through the medium of architecture are the sole correctives to hard and fast theories upon architectural expression.⁵⁷⁰

Judgement of Whitworth Scott's building, design philosophy, appearance and temperament came from all sides, the daily press, architectural journals and the public got involved, some more impassioned than others, but they were to be disappointed if they thought that Whitworth Scott would bow down to criticism. She had faced trial by media both prior to the build and during it and it seemed she had grown accustomed to censure. Sadly, throughout my research, there is little published reaction from Whitworth Scott, although she was interviewed by the *Daily Telegraph* in 1943. She defended her design by saying that in her view it was the limited approach of the directors rather than the fault of the theatre itself that had caused so much dispute and criticism.⁵⁷¹

7.1.3 Whitworth Scott's role in the winning design

At the time of the theatre competition, John Shepherd was working, along with Geoffrey Jellicoe, as a part time tutor at the AA. Throughout my research, it became apparent that Whitworth Scott's naivety was genuine and that there was a strong possibility that the theatre

⁵⁷⁰ *Builder*, 2 January, 1928.

⁵⁷¹ *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 September 1943.

competition entry was being worked on by Shepherd at the AA and he invited other students, past and present, to submit ideas. Elizabeth Chesterton, the daughter of Maurice, confirmed in an interview that Shepherd and his fiancée Alison Sleigh, Jellicoe and his wife Susan, and of course Whitworth Scott, were all involved in the design. In Elizabeth Chesterton's words they, 'all put their oars in on this scheme'.⁵⁷²

This went some way to endorse many aspects of research that I have found at odds with the generally accepted view that Whitworth Scott was the architect and that all the design ideas were solely hers. Whitworth Scott's friend, Geoffrey Jellicoe, supported Elizabeth Chesterton's view when he tactfully mentioned that John Shepherd and Alison Sleigh helped Scott with the drawings for the theatre with Maurice Chesterton 'hovering in the wings'.⁵⁷³

The evidence indicates that Jellicoe's role in the theatre was greater than everyone was led to believe. He published *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*⁵⁷⁴ in 1933 with a Foreword by William Bridges-Adams who wrote, '... and the added problem of foreseeing any and every fashion in which Shakespeare may be worthily performed by

⁵⁷² 'Interview with Dame Elizabeth Chesterton', Interviewed by Louise Brodie, *National Life Story Collections*, British Library, Created October 1997, 021A-C0467X0025XX-0200A0, [7 July, 2008]

⁵⁷³ G.A. Jellicoe, Obituary for Whitworth Scott, *Architects Journal*, xv, 12 July 1972, p.68.

⁵⁷⁴ G.A. Jellicoe, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1933.

succeeding generations – how well they have been solved.⁵⁷⁵ Jellicoe acknowledged that the preparation of the book in July 1932 was assisted mainly by the architects themselves, as well as the *Architectural Review*, *Architect and Building News*, the RIBA and the AA, making special mention of F.R. Yerbury's photography.

Jellicoe's book explained the history of the theatre plan with reference to contemporary theatres, extensive construction and equipment details used in the build of the Memorial Theatre including architectural drawings, exterior and interior photographs. When he described the competition, at no point did he specifically mention Whitworth Scott, instead, 'In the final round the assessors unanimously chose Design No.3.'⁵⁷⁶ The first time he mentioned Scott was, 'Following the award, Miss Elizabeth Scott went into partnership with Maurice Chesterton, FRIBA, and J.C. Shepherd, ARIBA, and the firm became known as Scott, Chesterton and Shepherd.'⁵⁷⁷ It is curious that as her friend, Jellicoe was reluctant to make mention of Scott's specific success, or mention her as the sole winner of the award.

Elizabeth Chesterton explained in her interview that the collaborated competition entry was submitted under Elizabeth Whitworth Scott's name, at which point she paused, then added, 'erm....which is I think all

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.viii.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

I will say about that.⁵⁷⁸ Despite her apparent reluctance to continue, she admitted that her father had affirmed that the design was Scott's. A statement issued by the architectural partnership was that Maurice Chesterton disclaimed 'any personal share whatever in the successful design'.⁵⁷⁹ Elizabeth Chesterton expanded on this by saying, 'he had nothing to do with designing the theatre. But I know he had everything to do with researching stage requirements, fire and health and safety requirements, negotiations with client fund raisers and the many specialists who were involved. In short, he was responsible for seeing the contract through in all its aspects.'⁵⁸⁰ She revealed that he had no interest in the design aspects of the theatre and quoted him as saying, 'I had nothing to do with the design at all, I got the buildings up.'⁵⁸¹

It is likely that Maurice Chesterton did involve himself with the technical side of the build as this is where his experience and expertise lay. But it was John Shepherd who did the designs and selected the good names for the fabrics and sculptures (*see Appendix Four*). As far as Chesterton was concerned, he looked to the business of architecture, while, referring to Shepherd and Whitworth Scott, 'The other two had their heads in the air.'⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁸ 'Interview with Dame Elizabeth Chesterton', Interviewed by Louise Brodie, *National Life Story Collections*, British Library, Created October 1997, 021A-C0467X0025XX-0200A0, [7 July, 2008]

⁵⁷⁹ M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994, p.90.

⁵⁸⁰ 'Interview with Dame Elizabeth Chesterton', L. Brodie, *National Life Story Collections*, British Library, October 1997, 021A-C0467X0025XX-0200A0.

⁵⁸¹ Letter from E. Chesterton to author, 1993, M.J. Pringle, *The Theatres of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1875-1992: An Architectural History*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1994, p.90.

⁵⁸² 'Interview with Dame Elizabeth Chesterton', L. Brodie, *National Life Story Collections*, British Library, October 1997, 021A-C0467X0025XX-0200A0.

If the design was a team effort at the AA, why did they choose to put Whitworth Scott's name to it? It is possible that there was a collective decision that Scott's name, with her family connections, would have more impact rather than a group of unknown students and junior lecturers from the AA. I have found no instances where Scott says she was not wholly responsible for the design, but neither does she mention other individuals. It is also possible that what it now translated as loyalty to others in the practice is in fact an acknowledgement of their greater involvement.

I sought answers to why she continued to assert that the design was a sole effort. It made sense to take all the praise if everything was going well, but I have demonstrated that the building had a great deal of bad press and the opinion of the design was not high. Why then, did she not step away and reveal that it was joint effort so that all the blame, which could ultimately affect her career, was not just with her?

Elizabeth Chesterton ended the segment of the interview by explaining that her father spent a lot of the build time worrying, 'Obviously he had a conscience.'⁵⁸³ Whether this was because of concerns over the build of the theatre or whether he was troubled that the choice of Whitworth Scott's design was that it would have greater popular appeal rather than on its architectural merits, may never be known.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

7.2 Whitworth Scott's Later Career

It is possible that Whitworth Scott's involvement with the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre had a negative effect on her later career. Information on her is scant in the years following her rapid rise to success. Soon after giving birth to their son, Alison Shepherd (née Sleigh) returned to work and set up a brief partnership with Janet Pott (née Fletcher).⁵⁸⁴ Lynne Walker recorded an interview with Janet Pott in 1984 who had formerly worked as Whitworth Scott's junior assistant in the late 1920s and early 1930s, at the time of the Memorial Theatre. It seems that Scott preferred female clients and Mrs Pott observed that 'She was more at ease with intellectual women as clients than the world of Shakespeare theatre'.⁵⁸⁵ Perhaps the male dominated world of theatre, architecture, budgets, contractors, and finally the press had finally taken their toll. There are references to Whitworth Scott retiring from architecture following her marriage to George Richards in 1936, but this is evidently not the case.

7.2.1 Gidea Park, Romford Garden Suburb

Scott, Shepherd and Breakwell were responsible for the 'Class E House' as part of the Modern Homes Exhibition at Gidea Park in London in 1934 to demonstrate to housing and planning authorities,

⁵⁸⁴ J. Gatley, 'Alison Shepherd, ARIBA; 'Success of New Zealand Lady' revisited', *Fabrications, The Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians*, Australia & New Zealand, 17 January, 2007, pp.20-45.

⁵⁸⁵ L. Walker, 'The Entry of Women into the Architectural Profession in Britain', *Women's Art Journal*, Vol. 7, No.1, (Spring-Summer,1986) p.17.

builders and the public the improvements made in modern housing, the revival of the Arts & Crafts and the progress of the garden suburb movement. The intention was to raise the standard of housing both in London and the suburbs and throughout the rest of Britain.⁵⁸⁶ The estate was built over phases, the earlier phase having houses designed by Parker & Unwin, William Curtis Green, Baillie Scott, Clough Williams-Ellis and C.R. Ashbee.



Fig.78 Scott, Shepherd and Breakwell, Class E House, Gidea Park (1934), Sept 2007

H. Myles published, *Small Houses, £500-£2500* (1937) to explore the damage that had been caused by the housing boom. He felt that the rise in the requirement for the semi-detached house had brought about harmful ribbon development and he attacked the 'huge parody of famous historical styles' which he saw as cheap and inappropriate. Instead, he published examples of houses that were appealing in their simplicity. Myles included houses by Maxwell Fry, Clough Williams-Ellis, Geoffrey Jellicoe, Goodhart-Rendell, FRS Yorke, houses in

⁵⁸⁶ *Book of the Exhibition of Houses and Cottages, Romford Garden Suburb, Gidea Park*, Published for the Exhibition Committee, London, 1911, Preface.

Hampstead Garden Suburb, Welwyn Garden City and of course Scott Chesterton and Shepherd. He included their house at Gidea Park and a house in Clapham, Sussex.⁵⁸⁷

7.2.2 The Wharrie Shelter

In 1935, the partnership of Scott, Chesterton and Shepherd designed *The Wharrie Cabman's Shelter* in London. Cabmen were not allowed to leave their vehicles when they were parked at a stand so the charity, *The Cabmen's Shelter Fund*, was set up in 1874 to construct and run shelters. Because of their positioning on a public highway the police stipulated the size, thought to be no larger than a horse and cart, but this still allowed for a working kitchen and seating for ten men.⁵⁸⁸



Fig.79 Scott, Chesterton and Shepherd, The Wharrie Shelter (1935), September 2008

⁵⁸⁷ H. Myles, *Small Houses £500-£2,500*, Architectural Press, London, 1937. Houses by: Christian Barman, Esher Place, Surrey; E Maxwell Fry, Bagshot and Wimbledon; Connell, Ward & Lucas, Bourne End Bucks; Clough Williams-Ellis, Portmeirion; Russell Page & GA Jellicoe, Dennis Lane, Stanmore, Middx.; HS Goodhart-Rendell, Cannes; Scott Chesterton & Shepherd, Gidea Park & Clapham, Sussex; Hugh Casson, Compton Down Hampshire; FWB Yorke, Stratford-upon-Avon; FRS Yorke, Iver, Bucks; others at Gidea Park, Welwyn Garden City & Hampstead Garden Suburb.

⁵⁸⁸ <http://www.urban75.org> [March, 2008]

The Wharrie Shelter was no exception and conformed to these rules by being a small, simple designed kiosk. The single storey structure was constructed in elm boarding supported on concrete legs at the side of the road on Rosslyn Hill in Hampstead.⁵⁸⁹ The building housed a small coffee stall with internal bench seating and the roof had deep eaves and mosaic panels inset by John Cooper as well as the brightly coloured mosaic panel set into the floor dated 'April 1935' in the Cubist style.⁵⁹⁰ Cooper was a painter and teacher as well as a renowned mosaic artist and founded the *East London Group*⁵⁹¹ in the mid twenties as well as designing the floor for the Contemporary Industrial Design Exhibition at Dorland Hall in 1933.⁵⁹²



Fig.80 John Cooper, mosaic panel, *The Wharrie Shelter* (1935), September 2008

It is not recorded what proportion of input each of the three partners had into the design but it is possible that the practice was chosen because of Whitworth Scott as it was commissioned by the feminist supporter

⁵⁸⁹ *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 22 November, 1996.

⁵⁹⁰ *The Architect and Building News*, 17 May, 1935, pp.190-191.

⁵⁹¹ John Cooper established the *East London Group* from the Bow & Bromley Evening Institute. The group comprised of aspiring East Enders and a small contingent from the Slade School of Art. It ran from the mid-20s to 1936. David Buckman, www.eastlondongroup.com [May, 2008]

⁵⁹² *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 22 November, 1996.

Mrs. Mary Wharrie,⁵⁹³ the financially independent daughter of Sir Henry Harben, the first Mayor of Hampstead.

7.2.3 Homer Farm School, Henley on Thames

Homer Farm School for Infants in Henley on Thames was built in 1936 and was a timber framed building with cedar cladding and a shingled roof. It was given an almost barn-like appearance to match its semi-rural site. The school accommodated private pre-school children and was initiated by Celandine Kennington, the independently wealthy wife of Eric Kennington who was responsible for the brick carvings on the front elevation of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. The commission for the school is believed to have been brought about by the friendship between Eric Kennington and J.C. Shepherd. The building was eventually taken over by Oxfordshire County Council and renamed Greys Road Infant School and then later demolished.⁵⁹⁴

7.2.4 Newnham College, Cambridge

By 1938 the partnership of Scott, Chesterton and Shepherd saw the departure of Maurice Chesterton and his replacement was John Breakwell (1905-1960) ARIBA. Breakwell was already a junior architect

⁵⁹³ Mrs. Mary Woodgate Harben Wharrie (1847-1937), married Thomas Wharrie in 1899. She was the daughter of Sir Henry Harben (d.1911) who was the Chairman of Prudential Assurance Company. <http://www.thecarpenterscompany.co.uk>.

⁵⁹⁴ The Kenningtons lived near John C. Shepherd and Alison Sleight in Henley-on-Thames in the thirties. Dr. J. Gatley, 'Alison Shepherd, ARIBA; 'Success of New Zealand Lady' revisited', *Fabrications, The Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians*, Australia & New Zealand, 17 January, 2007, pp.20-45.

in the practice and was also a family friend to the Chesterton's, cycling over to the now retired Maurice Chesterton to keep him in touch with what was going on in the there.⁵⁹⁵



Fig.81 Fawcett Building from Pfeiffer Arch, Newnham College (1938)

One of their first commissions, as *Messrs. Scott, Shepherd and Breakwell*, was the expansion to new Fawcett Building at Newham College in Cambridge which included converting certain rooms in the old buildings and adding new sanitary facilities. New blocks had to be constructed to replace the losses and provide accommodation for the increased amounts of students.⁵⁹⁶

The first completed section was opened by Queen Mary in 1938⁵⁹⁷ and was named after Philippa Garrett Fawcett (1868–1948), mathematician and daughter of Millicent Fawcett who co-founded the college. There are two possible reasons why Whitworth Scott was chosen for the commission. Firstly, Philippa Strachey's sister, Joan Pernel Strachey,

⁵⁹⁵ 'Interview with Dame Elizabeth Chesterton', L. Brodie, *National Life Story Collections*, British Library, October 1997, 021A-C0467X0025XX-0200A0.

⁵⁹⁶ *Architects Journal*, 25 August, 1938, p.321.

⁵⁹⁷ *Building*, 'Obituary', 30 June 1972, p.55.

was the Principal and was heavily involved with the *Junior Council of the London and National Society for Women's Service*, the forerunner to *The Fawcett Society*, of which Whitworth Scott was a member. Secondly, Philippa Fawcett lived with her mother on Gower Street which is adjacent to the AA on Bedford Square, so it is conceivable that Scott and Philippa Fawcett were acquainted.

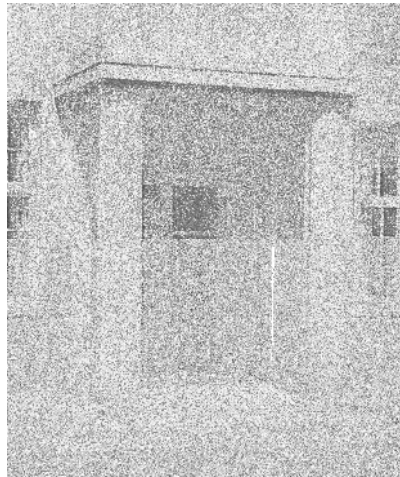


Fig.82 Detail of the entrance from the quadrangle

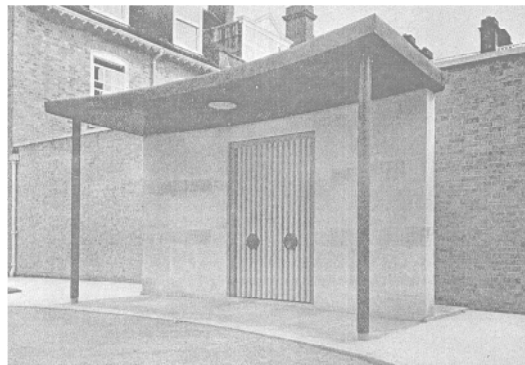


Fig.83 The entrance to the passageway

The buildings of Newnham College had originally been built by Basil Champneys⁵⁹⁸ and were now thought to be out of date.⁵⁹⁹ The greater

⁵⁹⁸ Basil Champneys (1842–1935) designed John Ryland's Library, Manchester. For him architecture was 'an art not a science' and would not join the RIBA, became a member of the Art Workers Guild instead. He was a pioneer of the Queen Anne style.

part of the Whitworth Scott addition retained the original Queen Anne style but it also contained elements of diluted modernism, for example, with the entrance to the main passageway as shown in the image above. Externally a silver-grey brick with red dressings was adopted to lighten the courtyard and to stand up to the elaborate carving and mouldings of the older buildings.⁶⁰⁰

7.2.5 Other Commissions

Research revealed other work by Whitworth Scott carried out before the Second World War. It is not known how Scott came about these commissions or if she worked on them as a partner in the practice. One private commission was 'Avon House' for her brother and his wife in Bournemouth in the grounds of the family practice. Another included a house and surgery for woman doctor in Morden, Surrey (1933), the Marie Curie Centre in Hampstead and a rural family home called *Fludgers Wood* near Ipsden in Oxfordshire.



Fig.84 Fludgers Wood, front elevation

⁵⁹⁹ 'New Buildings at Newnham College', *Architects Journal*, 25 August, 1938, p.310.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

7.2.6 Northallerton Senior School

The outbreak of the Second World War did not change the partnership of Scott, Shepherd and Breakwell and they continued to practice.

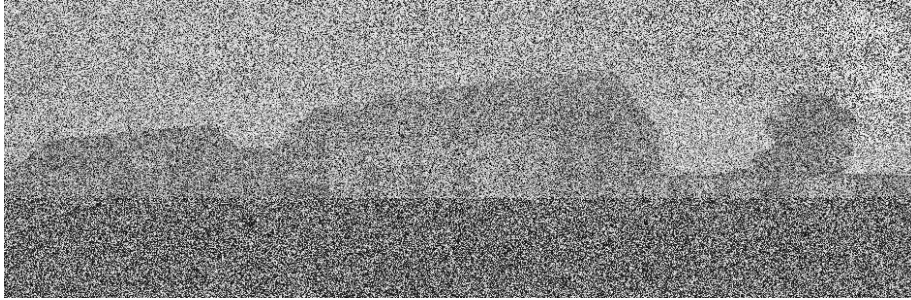


Fig.85 Scott, Shepherd & Breakwell, Northallerton Senior School (1941)

An article in the October 1941 edition of *The Architect and Building News* gave extensive coverage to the design and build of a large two-storey brick Senior School on the outskirts of Northallerton. Scott, Shepherd and Breakwell designed the buildings immediately in the centre of the site to obtain as much open space as possible and to be well away from traffic. Daylight was unobstructed with an avoidance of closed courts and the open layout of the plan.⁶⁰¹

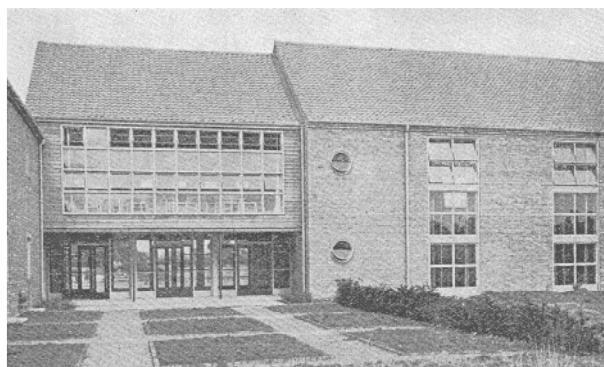


Fig.86 The Library and Assembly Hall

⁶⁰¹ 'Senior School, Northallerton', *The Architect and Building News*, 17 October 1941, pp.34-40.

7.3 Whitworth Scott after World War Two

As the war continued the partnership of Scott, Shepherd and Breakwell altered because of the departure of John Shepherd. After resigning from the partnership he returned to the army and, still using his skills as an architect, became responsible for designing and supervising military projects for American soldiers stationed in England.⁶⁰²

Whitworth Scott's career appears to have become less active. It was initially believed that she gave up practising for a short time before divorcing from George Richards.⁶⁰³ However, I have since discovered that she worked for *Ronald Phillips and Partners* and was involved in South Kinson Infants School in Bournemouth.⁶⁰⁴

By the 1960s she had returned to Bournemouth, she was still practising as an architect as Mrs. Richards, and worked in the Borough Architects Department. She became heavily involved with the modern, concrete design of the Boscombe Pier and the subsequent work on its refurbishment over several years.

⁶⁰² Dr. J. Gatley, 'Alison Shepherd, ARIBA; 'Success of New Zealand Lady' revisited', *Fabrications, The Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians*, Australia & New Zealand, 17 January, 2007, pp.20-45.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁴ 'South Kinson Infants School, Mount Road, Bournemouth, by Ronald A Phillips & Partners', *Architects Journal*, 13 March, 1952, p.337.



Fig.87 Boscombe Pier Head

Whitworth Scott retired in 1968 at the age of seventy, but after only four years of retirement, she died in Poole in Dorset,⁶⁰⁵ on Monday 19th June 1972. Her exit in the press mirrors her entrance, with her obituary in *The Times* referring to her competition win and her family links to the architectural Scotts. With reference to the Memorial Theatre, 'Someone described it as a 'tomb', another as a 'monster to overwhelm the romantic neighbourhood, a third as a 'jam factory' (why jam?).' There was even a further complaint at the use of red brick, 'on the basis that the bard should have been immortalised in white marble.'⁶⁰⁶ Her long-time friend, Geoffrey Jellicoe, was asked to write her obituary which appeared in the *Architects Journal* and he left her with, 'In the partnership Scott provided the initiative, Chesterton the administration and Shepherd the flair'.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁵ Blenheim, 12a Mount Pleasant Road, Poole, Dorset, *RIBA Directory*.

⁶⁰⁶ *The Times*, 22 June 1972, T.R., Vol.83 (Series A), 24 April 1972–29 Sept 1972.

⁶⁰⁷ *Architects Journal*, xv, 12 July 1972, p. 68.

Conclusion

Whitworth Scott's success was indisputable and the initial coverage by the press was favourable for this celebrated woman's breakthrough.

She took the opportunity of her time in the limelight to advance the cause of women in the profession by promoting her achievement as an encouragement to other young women entering architecture. However, despite the insistence of the press feminising both her and her building, she was keen to avoid the references to her sex and wanted others to acknowledge her as an *architect* rather than as a *female architect* and stress the modernity of the building without reference to gender.

Yet it now becomes apparent that the designs were possibly not solely hers but a team effort. Why then were the faults of the building left solely with Whitworth Scott? She exhibited a malleability in her character that developed into a manipulated individual who did not see the damage she was doing to her career. Instead, Scott adopted a modesty about her achievements from which she never waived and was quick to remind that her success was in part due to her partners. Her reluctance to take all the credit came across as loyalty when she acknowledged the help of her colleagues and Jellicoe fondly remembered Whitworth Scott as a gentle, unassuming, determined woman whose personal integrity 'acknowledged her associates help'.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁸ *Architects Journal*, xv, 12 July 1972, p. 68.

I have shown that Scott's later career consisted of smaller and lesser known commissions which amounted to little press coverage and rather than continuing her meteoric rise it appears that her career faltered. It is conceivable that the legacy of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre adversely affected her career and she could not continue her pioneering route as a female architect of the modernist style who acted as a role model to other younger female architects. Shakespeare and Stratford-upon-Avon had a contemporary theatre and Elizabeth Whitworth Scott's name would be forever linked to it. Whether or not her career suffered because of the notoriety of the theatre, or whether she chose to take a less controversial position in the profession is not clear.

CONCLUSION

The thesis began with an exploration of how such an inexperienced, female architect as Whitworth Scott could win such a prestigious competition as the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. Subject to attacks over its lifetime it, like its architect, has been neglected in accounts of British modernism. Scott has been remembered less for her architecture and more for her sex, something she was keen to avoid.

Having set out the societal context early in the thesis, I discussed Scott's remarkable win in a society that was still hostile to female architects. I demonstrated that the early stages of Scott's modernist philosophy began with the influences of the AA and was later reinforced by the experience of working with Hill and de Soissons. Whitworth Scott's time with Maurice Chesterton was short and his work was not particularly noteworthy. However, it was the unique mixture of experiences and knowledge gained during her studies and during her period in practice that enabled her to create something with great appeal for the competition judges.

Whitworth Scott's family connections were used as a justification for her achievements, but I subsequently demonstrated that there was more evidence that any success Scott had was not solely down to her relatives and they had no direct influence on her success or failure or her future architectural career. Whitworth Scott's experience with the

theatre was similar to that of her cousin, Giles Gilbert Scott and the Liverpool Cathedral, but she assumed a more acquiescent position with her peers and employers and was referred to as possessing traits such as sensitivity and a willingness to alter her design, which gave her a certain malleability. I have also revealed that at least one of Whitworth Scott's later commissions had elements of cronyism with her membership of the Junior Council facilitating her friendship with Joan Pernel Strachey, Principal of Newnham College, where Scott undertook a commission as Scott, Shepherd and Breakwell.

I examined how such an apparently shy and modest woman, who thought herself uninteresting, also possessed self-confidence and a self-belief in what she was trying to achieve. This came within spending five, not very outstanding, years at the AA achieving poor grades in theatrical design projects and less than three years working in the profession. One journalist said, 'It seems incredible that she could have produced something so entirely opposite to her own personality,'⁶⁰⁹ as the design appeared to have no trace of her character, in terms of humility or femininity.

An issue that became more significant in the thesis was the question of whether Whitworth Scott was solely responsible for the theatre design. Elizabeth Chesterton's revelation that it was a team effort at the AA does alter history somewhat. I have considered the possibility that

⁶⁰⁹ *Daily News*, 6 January, 1928, T.R., Vol.21, 10 November 1927-5 April 1928.

Chesterton would have had a sense a loyalty towards her father and it could have clouded her take on the circumstances.

However, evidence from Geoffrey Jellicoe, both his comprehensive study of the theatre and his contribution to Whitworth Scott's obituary never specifically ascribe the design to her. There is also evidence in the Foreword of his book with John Shepherd, which indicates that Shepherd was instrumental in assisting Whitworth Scott, 'to win for her the international competition for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.'⁶¹⁰ Jellicoe was a longstanding friend to Whitworth Scott and yet he never exclusively mentioned her groundbreaking achievement.

This thesis began with the intention of demonstrating how Whitworth Scott achieved such groundbreaking success by winning such a major architectural competition on her own merits. In so many ways I wished this were true, but the search for a confirmation of these statements came across too many facts that proved otherwise. I conclude that Scott was an important part of a group of architects that submitted a winning entry, who fronted the project through the exciting early days and the latter days of criticism. She, like the building that she designed, was a symbol of a new emancipated form of modernism, one which took Britain many years to embrace.

⁶¹⁰ John Chiene Shepherd and Geoffrey Jellicoe, *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance*, 4th edition, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, December 1986.

Regardless of speculation, her career suffered as a result and she either chose to step out of the limelight or the decision was forced upon her. However, her naivety was so apparent in many situations, I have to consider that she was guided badly and did not foresee the damage it would have on her name and reputation. It is likely that she received as much help compiling the competition entry as she did refining the design and it was not just her who won the award. As such, the mantle of being the first woman architect to build a public building in Britain cannot be placed with Scott, a fact that no-one within architectural circles ever directly said, but many alluded to, which is also part of the history and values of the period, as today such discretion would surely not occur.

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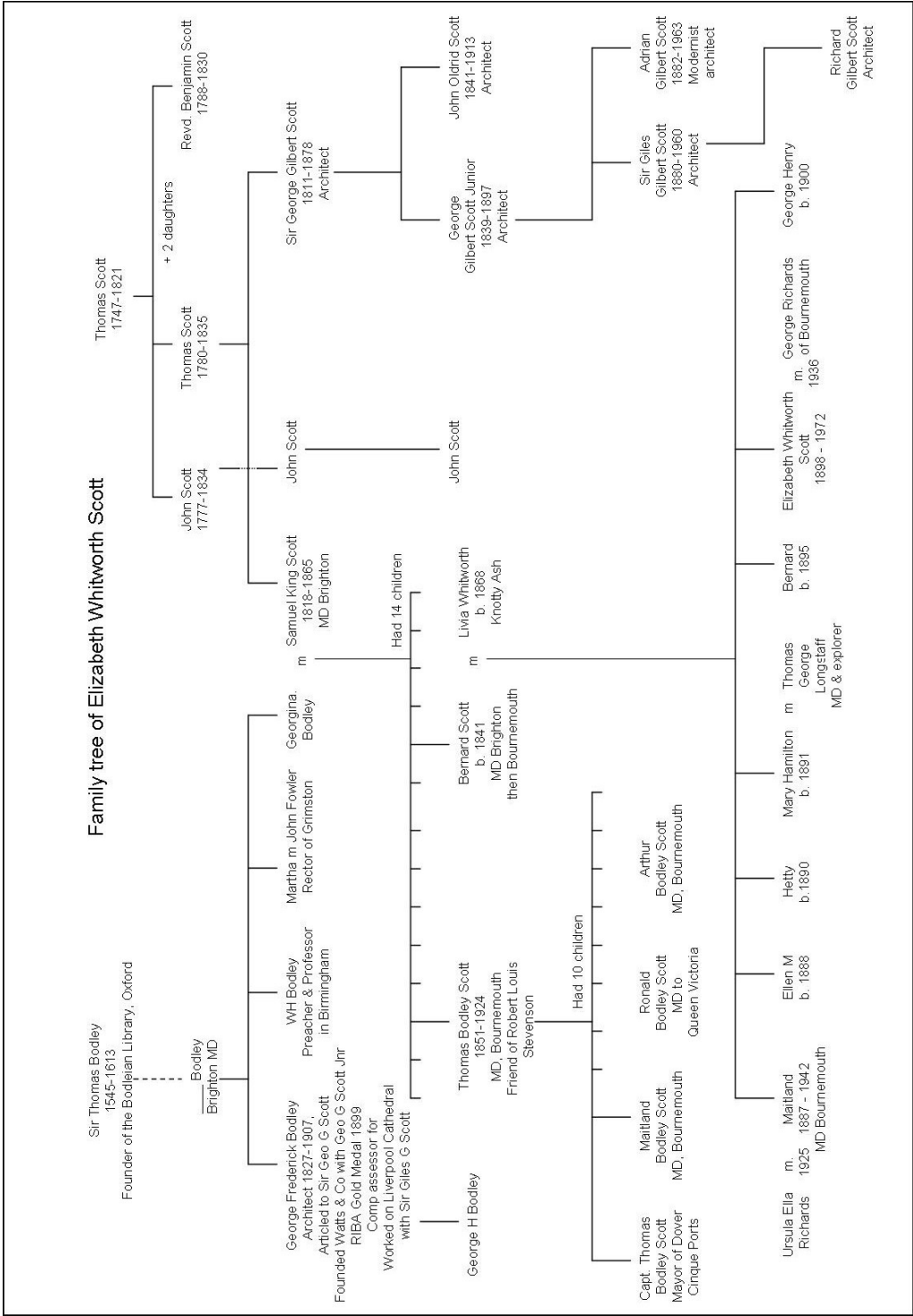
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Chronology of Events

1898	Elizabeth Whitworth Scott born in Bournemouth
1913	Attends Redmoor & Teesdale Boarding School
1914	First World War breaks out
1917	Leaves Redmoor & Teesdale Boarding School
1918	First World War ends
1919	Attends the Architectural Association
1924	Graduates from the Architectural Association
1924	Works with Wigglesworth & Niven
1924-25	Works with Louis de Soissons
1925-26	Works with Oliver Hill
1926	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre burns down
1926	Works with Maurice Chesterton
1927	International architectural competition launched
1928	Whitworth Scott wins Shakespeare Memorial Theatre competition
1928	Research trip to mainland Europe
1929	Foundation stone laid and work on the theatre begins
1930	'Beautiful England' campaign launched
1930s	Avon House for her brother and sister-in-law
1932	Opening ceremony for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1935	The Wharrie Cabman's Shelter, Rosslyn Hill
1936	Marries George Richards

1936	Whitworth Scott re-called to the theatre to add seats to the gallery and new areas of refreshment for the public
1938	Messrs. Scott, Shepherd & Breakwell formed
1938	Re-called to the theatre again for more modifications
1938	Fawcett Building, Newnham College, Cambridge
1939	World War II breaks out
1941	Senior School, Northallerton
1945	World War II ends
1950s	Joins Ronald Phillips & Partners
1950s	Sir Anthony Quayle carries out modifications to theatre
1960s	Peter Hall and Trevor Nunn carry out further modifications
1960s	Joins Bournemouth Borough Architects Department
1961	Renamed The Royal Shakespeare Theatre
1968	Whitworth Scott retires
1972	19 th June, Elizabeth Whitworth Scott dies in Poole, Dorset
1980	The Royal Shakespeare Theatre Grade II Listed
1993	The Royal Shakespeare Theatre Grade II* Listed
2007	Bennetts Associates take over the rebuild project
2008	More funding for rebuild requested
2010	Expected completion date for rebuild



APPENDIX THREE

Speech made by H.R.H., The Prince of Wales at the opening ceremony of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 23 April, 1932.

It is a very inspiring thought that Shakespeare should be honoured in his home town by the dedication of this magnificent theatre. Nothing can more truly be called a memorial than such a theatre, which perpetuates, side by side with the historical memory of our greatest dramatic poet, the living spirit of his genius.

Shakespeare himself would not have asked for another statue to be erected in his honour; he could have desired nothing better than that his plays should find a permanent home within a hundred yards of the Church where he lies.

He was an actor too, accustomed to playing under difficult circumstances, and he would have rejoiced to know that as a workshop for the production of his plays, this theatre contains more perfect accommodation and equipment than any other erected in the English-speaking world. 'See these players well bestowed' – the instructions which he put into the mouth of Hamlet – have been faithfully carried out here today.

I think it is inspiring, too, that people from all over the world who visit England and go on a pilgrimage through its countryside should be able to find, in its very heart, a theatre which reverberates with the noblest poetry in our language, and which stages plays which represent the highest achievement of our race.

Shakespeare was, above all things, an Englishman. He loved his country with a great passionate love, and his magic verse not only breathes the air of the countryside, the air of our long, still summer afternoons, but strikes back at the very heart of our history, with all its pageantry and daring. We feel proud that this distinctive atmosphere of old England is kept alive here, so that our visitors may capture its essence and take away with them lasting memories.

That men and women from other lands do, indeed, treasure their memories of the Stratford-upon-Avon festivals is proved by the generous answer they have given to the call sent out six years ago to make good a calamity that overtook the old Memorial Theatre. Had this original playhouse not given them inspiration, there could have been no such response from overseas.

It gives one pleasure to know that the New Shakespeare Memorial Theatre is not alone the tribute of England to her great son, but also, and even more, the tribute of the whole civilised world to a great world figure. Although in one sense Shakespeare's appeal is peculiarly

addressed to the hearts and minds of his fellow countrymen, his genius is yet universal and evokes the homage of the men of all nations. What is equally important, he speaks as significantly for the man-in-the-street as he does for the student, so that, in a double sense, he may be described as a universal poet.

The secret of this wide appeal is that Shakespeare took an intense interest in this workaday world of ours and was too much in love with living ever to become engrossed with mere theories about life. He delighted in all swift, true things - the galloping horses, the music of the hounds, the skill and the backbone of the men-at-arms and the quiet courage so often to be found in the simplest human heart.

In describing this theatre as a world-tribute to Shakespeare, I should like to mention Britain's special appreciation of the very generous help which has been forthcoming from America. The American people share with us the great treasury of our language and of all the noble works which that language has enshrined, and it is a real source of both pleasure and pride for us to know that they do not lightly value this priceless heritage. The ships that sailed westwards had not set forth in any numbers before Shakespeare's time and therefore the world's master-dramatist is historically among the ancestors common to the two English-speaking peoples.

We are proud and grateful that the citizens of the great nation across the sea should have taken such a prominent part in making it possible for a fine and beautifully-equipped playhouse to be opened in his honour today.

It is now my privilege, on behalf of His Majesty the King, to declare the New Shakespeare Memorial Theatre open and dedicated to the immortal memory of William Shakespeare.

Source:

A.K. Chesterton, *Brave Enterprise: A History of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Stratford-upon-Avon, J. Miles & Co. Ltd., London, 1934, pp.51-54.

APPENDIX FOUR

ARCHITECTS, CONTRACTORS and SUBCONTRACTORS

ARCHITECTS

MESSRS SCOTT, CHESTERTON & SHEPHERD, F.& AA.R.I.B.A.

CONSULTANTS

Structural Engineer, Mr. B.L. Hurst, M.Inst.C.E., M.I.Mech.E.

Acoustic Consultant, Mr. Hope Bagenal, A.R.I.B.A.

Consulting Heating Engineer, Mr. W. MACINTYRE

Sculptor, Mr. Eric Kennington

Colour Decoration Consultant, Mr. Walpole Champneys

Lighting Consultants, Messrs Ridge & Aldred

Designer of Mosaic Fountain & Door Furniture, Miss Gertrude Hermes

Designer of the Decoration of the Fire Curtain, Mr. Vladimir Polunin

Designers of the Decoration of the Gallery Bar, Messrs Mollo & Egan

Designer of Special Curtains, Mr. J. Armstrong

GENERAL CONTRACTORS

For the Superstructure, Messrs G.E.Wallis & Sons Ltd.

For the Foundations, Messrs Holliday & Greenwood Ltd.

Clerk of Works, Mr. R.C. Long *General Foreman*, Mr. E.G. Miller

Structure

1. Moreland Hayne & Co. Ltd., *Steelwork*
2. The British Reinforced Concrete Engineering Co. Ltd., *Foundation reinforcement*
3. The Cement Marketing Co. Ltd., *Cement*
4. S & E Collier Ltd., *Facing, silver-grey bricks and bricks for carving*
5. Williamson, Cliff & Co. Ltd., *Grey interior bricks*
6. The Sussex Brick Co. Ltd., *Facing bricks*
7. The London Brick Co. & Forders Ltd., *'Phorpres' bricks for structural work*
8. The Keline Co. Ltd., *Terracotta block floors*
9. The Birmingham & Midland Counties Val de Travers Paving Co. Ltd., *Asphalte (foundation contract)*
10. The Limmer & Trinidad Lake Asphalte Co. Ltd., *Asphalte (superstructure contract)*
11. J.F. Booth & Son, *Hornton stone*
12. Sika-Francois Ltd., *Waterproofing cement tray under oil tank*

Structural Finish

1. John P. White & Sons Ltd., *Decorative doors, auditorium panelling, counters etc.*
2. G.E. Wallis & Sons Ltd., *General joinery and special joinery for Royal Box*
3. George Parnall & Co., *Metal doors, payboxes, metal columns*
4. A.M. MacDougall & Son, *Hardwood flooring*
5. Henry Hope & Sons Ltd., *Metal windows*
6. Comyn Ching & Co. Ltd., *Marquises and other decorative metalwork*
7. James Gibbons Ltd., *Decorative metalwork and some metals used on doors*
8. Clark & Fenn Ltd., *Metal bracketing, plain and decorative plasterwork*
9. H.T. Jenkins & Son Ltd., *Marblework*
10. Stratford-upon-Avon Guild Ltd., *Leadwork*
11. The Fram Reinforced Concrete Co. Ltd., *Corkfloors*
12. Rust's Vitreous Mosaic Tile Co., *Vitreous mosaic*
13. Chance Bros. & Co. Ltd., *Glass decoration, light fittings and glass silk for heating panel insulation*
14. Pilkington Bros. Ltd., *Window glass*
15. Compton Bros., *Glazing*
16. The Paint & Cellulose Spraying Co. Ltd., *Decorations*
17. Stevens & Adams Ltd., *Blockflooring*
18. Diespeker & Co. Ltd., *Terrazzo*

19. The Granwood Flooring Co. Ltd., *Granwood blocks on floors of Dressing Rooms*
20. Henry L. Cooper Co. Ltd., *Granite setts and kerbs*
21. J.A. King & Co. Ltd., *Pavement and roof lights*
22. The St. Helens Cable & Rubber Co. Ltd., *Rubber floors*
23. H.W. Cullum & Co. Ltd., *'Akoustikos felt'*
24. The Trucker Armoured Plywood Co. Ltd., *Doors and table tops*
25. C. Trumper & Sons Ltd., *Granolithic and plastering*
26. Redalon Ltd., *Bulldog floorclips in restaurant etc.*
27. Birmabright Ltd., *Birmabright used in door furniture and decorative metalwork*
28. Light Steelwork (1925) Ltd., *Steel staircases, gangways, ladders and hand railings*
29. Haywards Ltd., *Stage lantern light*
30. Nobel Chemical Finishes Ltd., *Paints, enamels and finishes*

Mechanical Equipment

1. G.N. Haden & Sons Ltd, *Heating and ventilating plant*
2. Knight & Co. (Engineers) Ltd., *Stage lifts and rolling stages, cyclorama, act-drop control and forestage*
3. The British Vacuum Cleaner & Engineering Co. Ltd., *Vacuum plant*
4. The Strand Electric and Engineering Co. Ltd., *Stage lighting*
5. Dent & Hellyer Ltd., *Drainage, Plumbing and sanitary equipment*
6. Merryweather & Sons Ltd., *Fire curtain*
7. Mather & Platt Ltd., *Sprinkler installation, hydrant service and fire appliances*
8. Gimson & Co. (Leicester) Ltd., *Counterweight installations*
9. The Edison Swan Electric Co. Ltd., *Cornice strip lighting*
10. British Insulated Cables Ltd., *Cables*
11. The Credenda Conduits Co. Ltd., *Conduits*
12. Ingram & Kemp, *Electric light fittings*
13. George Ellison Ltd., *Switchgear*
14. F.A. Greene & Co. Ltd., *Standard lamps in car park*
15. The Midland Electrical Manufacturing Co., *Distribution boards and front of house intake switchboard*
16. J.H. Tucker & Co. Ltd., *Switches and plugs*
17. Gent & Co. Ltd., *Telephones*
18. The British Thomson-Houston Co. Ltd., *'Mazda' lamps*
19. The National Radiator Co. Ltd., *'Britannia' heating boilers*
20. Hartley & Sugden Ltd., *Hot water boiler and 'Oil-o-matic' oil burners*
21. Matthews & Yates Ltd., *Ventilating gear*
22. Shropshire, Worcestershire & Staffs Electric Power Co., *Electric wiring*

23. Haywards Ltd., *Emergency ventilators*

General Equipment

1. Heal & Son Ltd., *Furniture*
2. Gordon Russell Ltd., *Furniture*
3. J. Cheal & Sons Ltd., *Horticultural planting*
4. Hodsons Ltd., *Turfing, roads etc.*
5. A.V.Humphries, *Carpets*
6. G.E. Wallis & Sons, Ltd., (Furnishing & Decorating Branch) *Fabrics and hangings*
7. The Wolseley Sheep Shearing Machine Co. Ltd, *Framework of auditorium seating*
8. Macinlop Ltd., *Rubber seating to chairs*
9. Theatre Equipment Ltd., *Fixing and upholstery of auditorium seating etc.*
10. Parker, Winder & Achurch Ltd., *Special floor door springs*
11. Jackson Boilers Ltd., *Hot water boilers for kitchen*
12. Staines Kitchen Equipment Co. Ltd., *Kitchen equipment*
13. Wm. List & Sons Ltd, *Horsehair*
14. Cresta Silk Ltd., *Special curtains*

Source:

G.A. Jellicoe, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1933,
pp.96-98.